Volume Three

معارف مصلح الأمت

The Statements and Lectures of Muslihul Ummat

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyulāh Sāhib

رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ

Compiled and Annotated by:
Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī

Translated by:
Maulānā Mahomed Mahomedy

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Muslihul Ummat Allāhābād have been able to publish several important books on rectification, Allāh-consciousness, academic and religious works, and various biographies within a short period of time. Even at this moment, several important works on various topics are either being arranged or written. Others are already on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* honour us by enabling us to present them to you as soon as possible.

From among these important books is the third volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*. This is actually a valuable treasure-house of the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, pearls of Dīn and sciences of the Qur'ān and Hadīth as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his assemblies. My honourable father worked untiringly to simplify and expound on them. In this way he has made them equally beneficial to the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to complete this important work. Āmīn.

Muhammad ʿAbdullāh Qamar az-Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī
Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād
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India

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the third volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* is in your hands. People have already written about its benefit and usefulness. The words of appreciation which we periodically hear and read by the ʿulamā' and Sufis are a source of delight and happiness to our hearts and minds, and an encouragement. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them.

I request the reader to pray that this beneficial series continues for at least ten volumes. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, there are many statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which need to be presented. I therefore request my assistants to render this service by working hard, striving and focussing on this task. I have full hopes in Allāh *taʿālā* rewarding them in the Hereafter for this important Dīnī service and the benefit it entails. I make an earnest duʿā' for it.

A point of joy is that the one who made these statements himself encourages us to read them. This is quoted in *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I feel it appropriate to quote it here.

> People are benefiting tremendously from the *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* which is published from here. They express their impressions regularly via the letters which they write to me.
>
> One person wrote: "Māshā Allāh, *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* is really fulfilling the duty of enabling us to recognize and learn the truth. Although I am deprived of your

close company, I am deriving far more educational blessings through this periodical than what I derive when I occasionally have the opportunity of presenting myself to you." He also wrote: "In the latest issue, I read the article on the reality of inventions. My heart and tongue spontaneously responded with 'Māshā Allāh' and 'Sub-hānallāh'. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled Hadrat to expound this reality so correctly and in a manner which probably no one from the present seniors paid attention to."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* wrote in his reply to this person:

I am overjoyed by the fact that people are deriving many benefits from *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. Those who are far away are also benefiting. I quote from *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* of ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* to support what I just wrote:

فنابت عنهم رسائلهم بعد موتهم في نصح المريدين

The writings of the Ahlullāh serve as their deputies after their death in advising their disciples.

He refers to their writings as their deputies. The blessings and teachings of the Ahlullāh can be proliferated by creating an interest in their writings and books. The blessings which their disciples used to acquire when they were alive can be acquired from their written works after

their death. It is essential to study their writings with full concentration of the heart so that benefits could be derived from them.

In this regard, he says further: It is the responsibility of the seniors to compile and collate their sciences and mysteries. This surpasses all other duties because nothing else can take the place of their explanation of the ailments of the heart and other matters related to the Sharīʿat. Each one of them has a special rank in his affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* which is not shared by anyone else. This is why no one else can explain these things.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* says further on:

When a person's taste buds become spoilt, he has to take some medication to set them in order. I am speaking about the very same medication at present. When a limb is afflicted by a physical ailment, it is treated. You can understand spiritual ailments in the same light. When the heart falls ill and its sense of taste becomes spoilt, there is a need to treat it. This is done to set right its taste. The treatment for it is the same, viz. study the writings of the saints carefully. This is because the speech of the Ahlullāh turns an impotent man into a potent man, and a potent man into a lion. Their speech has a powerful effect which causes the condition of the heart to change.

I constantly receive letters on this subject. People write to me and say that the condition of their heart is changing after reading *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I am quoting a few letters here:

1. This unworthy fellow is presently studying Hadrat's statements, especially *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq.*

Hadrat! I am saying without any exaggeration that – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – I have a keen interest in reading Dīnī books and articles. However, I do not know what your *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* did to me that I have lost interest in reading other books and articles. My heart desires to read your statements and teachings again and again. I continue reading them but I still want to read more.

2. When I sit down to read *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*, I feel as though I am sitting in the largest dār al-ʿulūm of the world, the shaykh of the world is delivering a lecture and my heart is getting closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. My eyes also shed tears when I read certain themes such as Allāh *taʿālā* never wastes away His devoted servants.

3. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the benefit and blessings of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* are almost total and complete in this region.

4. Observe the following letter which a person writes to his friend:

I was at a person's place and my eyes fell on *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I read it and was

> overjoyed. I became a subscriber to it and also ordered all the back issues. After reading this periodical, I developed a yearning to meet Maulānā Sāhib. I still am not fully convinced about this shaykh/murīd relationship, but I am desirous of benefiting from the company of a pious ʿālim who is a friend of Allāh *taʿālā*. I try to meet saints and dervishes. I do not know when Allāh *taʿālā* will open my heart and enable me to receive guidance from a qualified mentor. Was salām.
>
> I was speaking on the subject of finding sweet things to be bitter, and vice versa. This happens when one's taste buds are spoilt. There is a need to set them right. This can be done through the company of the Ahlullāh and studying their books. That is all.

Glory to Allāh! These are extremely useful themes which ought to be embedded in our hearts. The statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are generally of this nature. It seems as though they are being cast into his pure heart for the sake of rectification of the Muslim community. When my beloved wife and beloved son, Maulwī Maqbūl Ahmad Qāsimī, were admitted in P.G.I. Hospital and Sahārā Hospital in Lucknow, Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Rābiʿ Hasanī Nadwī, his brother, Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Wādih Rashīd Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* and a few of their associates came to visit. On that occasion, I presented to them the manuscript of the second volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*. On reading its subject matter,

Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Wādih Rashīd Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* said: “It is essential reading for the rectification of the Muslim community.”

May Allāh *taʿālā* enable this work to continue in the best way and may He accept it. Āmīn. It is my wish that at least ten volumes of this series be printed so that the special academic and spiritual themes of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* may be recorded, and a rich treasure-house of rectification and training may be presented to the Muslim community.

I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to fulfil this wish, accept it and enable everyone to benefit from it. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Rajab al-Murajjab 1439 A.H.
April 2018

IMPRESSION (1)

Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Abul Qāsim Nuʿmānī Sāhib
(Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband)

باسمه سبحانه وتعالى

Allāh *taʿālā* has been especially gracious towards Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī *dāmat barakātuhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled him to remain in the company, pledge bayʿat and benefit from two great Sufis of his time. Allāh *taʿālā* combined in him the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh*, and to convey their teachings.

By virtue of the lofty academic position which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred on him, he is a successful teacher, a prolific writer and an excellent orator. He also combines all this with the science of spiritual reformation and rectification. He has written several books on rectification of character, setting right of transactions and dealings, and various other themes. It is out of his humility that although he himself holds a laudable position, he has made it his continued practice to explain, expound and simplify the sciences of the elders; and to collate and arrange the statements of the pious predecessors. Several volumes of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, and simplification and explanation of the lectures and statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* have been continuing for quite some time.

Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat is the latest academic and rectificational work of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad

Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī. It contains the statements and lectures of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which had been published in the bi-monthly *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. They are now being published in book form with the explanations of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib. Two volumes have already been published and the third volume is now ready.

Allāh *taʿālā* blessed Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī with a pure and lofty academic taste, and is taking phenomenal Dīnī services from him. Books on knowledge, cognition, spiritual purification and rectification are continuously flowing from his prolific pen. In addition to his own writings, he is continuously occupied in collating, arranging, explaining and simplifying the academic and rectificational works of our seniors. The book before you is an important link in this chain.

The lofty position which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* held in the sight of his mentor, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu* can only be fathomed by those insightful people of knowledge and cognition who had the occasion to attend Hadrat's assemblies. However, the succeeding generations can also benefit from their published statements and lectures. This is especially so when the explanation and simplification of these lectures have been done by Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī who had spent such a long time in his company, identified his temperament fully and is himself a senior saint.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless Hadrat Maulānā with a long life accompanied with good health and wellness. May Allāh *ta'ālā* enable the Muslim community to derive maximum benefit from him. Āmīn.

Abul Qāsim Nu'mānī
Principal – Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband
20 Sha'bān 1439 A.H.
7 May 2018

IMPRESSION (2)

H̲ad̲rat ʿAllāmah Khālid Mah̲mūd S̲āh̲ib
(Islamic Academy, Manchester, U.K.)

The first lesson of the Qur'ān is that Allāh *taʿālā* alone is worthy of worship.

فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ.

Know, then, that none is worthy of worship but Allāh.[1]

The other lesson which we learn is:

إِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِيْ تَجْرِيْ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَآ أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ مَّآءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ص وَّتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيٰحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ.

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the changing of the night and day, in the ships that sail upon the ocean with things of benefit for mankind, in the water which Allah sent down from the sky thereby giving life to the earth after it had been lifeless and dispersed in it all kinds of animals, in the changing of the winds and in the clouds that are subservient to His command between the heaven and earth - surely in all these things are signs for the intelligent.[2]

---

[1] Sūrah Mu̲hammad, 47: 19.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 164.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بِيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ.

Did you not see that Allāh sent down water from the sky and then We brought forth therewith fruits of various colours? In the mountains are streaks of white and red of various hues and [others] jet-black.

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ.

He whom We bring to old age, We reverse him in his growth. Do they not understand?[1]

It is from the Messengers that we will learn that there is Allāh, He is one and He alone is worthy of worship. However, the true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* is acquired through those things which Allāh *taʿālā* described in the above three verses and other verses like them. We learn from this that divine guidance descends into the hearts through the teaching of the Messengers and their deputies. Allāh's true recognition is then conferred to those fortunate people who ponder and reflect over these matters. If we were to combine the two we could say that He has been accepted and recognized. In the terminology of the Sufis this is known as īmān and cognition. After having īmān in Allāh *taʿālā*, he goes out searching to recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. He observes the various creations of Allāh *taʿālā*, ponders and reflects over them, and then achieves His recognition which is the objective of creating him. In his *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*, ʿAllāmah Sayyid Mah̲mūd Ālūsī *rah̲imahullāh* (d. 1270 A.H.) explains the following verse:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 68.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ.

I created jinn and man solely for My worship.

As:

ليعرفون[1]

So that they may recognize Me.

This explanation is related from Mujāhid *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* (d. 104 A.H.) who was a student of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu.*

ʿAllāmah <u>H</u>asan ibn Masʿūd Baghawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* refers to this explanation as the best. He writes:

قال مجاهد إلا لعرفوني، وهذا أحسن لأنه لو لم يخلقهم لم يعرف وجوده وتوحيده.[2]

Mujāhid said: So that they may recognize Me. This is the best explanation because if He did not create them they would not have known His existence and His oneness.

Man can progress to such an extent in his recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* that he can be blessed with the joy of His recognition at every step.

<u>H</u>akīmul Ummat <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Thānwī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* heard the following couplet one day:

---

[1] روح المعاني: ج ١٤، ص ٢٢.

[2] تفسير البغوي: ج ٤، ص ٢٨٨. تفسير الخازن: ج ٤، ص ١٩٧.

> I went into the garden and looked at every flower. It neither has your colour nor your fragrance.

He commented: What he said is correct, but he was not a gnostic. Had he been a gnostic he would have said:

> I went into the garden and looked at every flower. It has exactly your colour and your fragrance.

Had the poet been a gnostic, every flower and every petal of the flowers would have opened to him a register of Allāh's recognition.

Facts and sciences in the statements of the Sufis are not unfamiliar words. Facts are learnt and sciences are recognized. Facts are not prone to change, but there are many levels of sciences. Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is – from a certain angle – referred to as Hakīmul Ummat because his statements would not change. At the same time, he did have a system of Tarjīh ar-Rājih. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* enjoyed a special position in the rectification of conditions. In the Chishtī Sābrī Sufi order of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, the names of Hadrat Shāh Masīhullāh Jalālābādī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* are well-known. These two saints were engulfed in the gnosticism of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. They adopted his sciences and flew so high that an entire world was illuminated by their light of spirituality. At present, the rectificational service of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* in the form of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* is a light to the eyes and a joy to the heart. The third senior saint with Hadrat Shāh Masīhullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*

and Hadrat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* of Hardoi. Included in this line is the other senior khalīfah of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī *rahimahullāh*. His recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* released countless people into the ocean of gnosticism and conveyed countless others in the close proximity of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The writer of these lines has the honour of pledging bayʿat to and becoming a mujāz-e-suhbat of Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hasan Amritsarī *rahimahullāh* (the founder of Jāmiʿah Ashrafīyyah, Lahore), Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Masīhullāh Jalālābādī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib Hardoi *rahimahullāh*. I also had the good fortune of accompanying Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* on a hajj journey.

I observed the blessings and influence of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Masīhullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Mahmūd Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* (the head muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband and khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Muhājir Madanī *rahimahullāh*) in South Africa and various other countries. The people of the truth found the general blessings of Mujaddid Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* everywhere. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a confluence of the oceans of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh*.

The splendour of India

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and various Islamic conquerors perceived the fragrant and cool breeze of

this region. Muslims from many countries observed the splendour of this land and decided to settle down here. H̲ad̲rat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* relates a statement of H̲ad̲rat ʿAlī *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu*. One portion of it is quoted here:

وأطيب أرض في الأرض ريحا الهند هبط بها آدم عليه السلام من الجنة فعلق شجرها من ريح الجنة.[1]

The most pleasant region on earth is where the wind of India blows. Ādam ʿalayhis salām descended from Paradise on this land and so, the trees of this land became attached with the wind of Paradise.

Al-H̲ākim *rah̲imahullāh* relates the above statement as follows in his *al-Mustadrak*:

قال علي بن أبي طالب: أطيب ريح في الأرض الهند هبط بها آدم عليه الصلوة والسلام فعلق شجرها من ريح الجنة...هذا حديث صحيح على شرط مسلم ولم يخرجاه.[2]

ʿAlī ibn Abī T̲ālib rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu said: The most pleasant wind on earth is in India. Ādam ʿalayhis salām descended there and so, the trees of this land became attached with the wind of Paradise…This is an authentic H̲adīth based on the prerequisites laid down by Imām Muslim. Imām Muslim and Imām Bukhārī did not relate it.

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[1] التمهيد لابن عبد البر: ج ٦، ص ٣٤.

[2] المستدرك: ج ١، ص ٥٩٢.

The Hindus of this region were immersed in idol-worship. Despite this, the worship of the truth brought ʿĀrif Billāh H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī Ajmerī *rah̲imahullāh* here. It was from the Hindus themselves that Baba Nanak rose up, discarded idolatry and called towards Oneness. The Tartars were a martial nation. They too pitched the tent of peace here. The Arabs left their deserts and settled down here. The soil was extremely fertile and it absorbed new nations within itself. ʿAllāmah Iqbāl rightly said:

> The land in which Chishtī proclaimed the true message. The garden in which Nanak sang the song of monotheism.
>
> The place which the Tartars made their home. The land which prompted the Arabs to leave their deserts.
>
> The place which left the Greeks confounded and gave knowledge and craft to the entire world.
>
> The soil which had the effect of gold and filled the Turks with pearls.
>
> That is my land, that is my land.[1]

The reader has already read about the difference between facts and sciences. Facts are learnt while sciences are recognized. Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* was from the saints of cognition. His senior khalīfah, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān S̲āh̲ib Allāhābādī refers to him as “Qut̲b Aʿz̲am”:

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[1] *Kulliyyāt Iqbāl*, p. 56.

> Such was our H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* the Qut̲b Aʿz̲am. It is solely through Allāh's grace that we are affiliated to a saint of this calibre. This is the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills. Many ʿulamā' of India and Pakistan reverted to him. So much so that even his own teacher, H̲ad̲rat ʿAllāmah Muh̲ammad Ibrāhīm Balyāwī S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* – a head teacher at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband – had reverted to him and became his khalīfah.[1]

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān S̲āh̲ib Allāhābādī has done a great favour to his friends and associates by compiling the sciences of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* and presenting them in a simplified and enjoyable manner. This book is in two large volumes.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān S̲āh̲ib Allāhābādī instructed me to write some lines in the form of a review of this book. It is easy to voice one's opinions on rules and regulations. As for sciences, that is extremely difficult to do. It can only be done by the one who has those sciences; it is not in me. Yes, what I can say is that those who read this book will not find it to be a book but an assembly of rectification and training.

The difference between a book and an assembly

A person who reads a books and listens to it being read to him thinks that he is reading something. The person who sits in an assembly thinks that he is

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[1] *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat*, vol. 1, p. 31.

understanding something. In both cases, it is the assembly which takes precedence. Those who understood in the first era of Islam are known as Sahābah. We learn from this that it is companionship which eventually surpasses everything, even if it is for a few moments. The highest ranking people who benefited from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* were those who acquired knowledge from him. Those very same ones then acquired spiritual purification from him. We learn from this that there is no dichotomy between the two. Spiritual purification is the next step in the process of training. Whatever is acquired from the saints is essentially acquired from their assemblies and company.

> A madrasah only teaches the lesson. It is
> a human who makes one into a human.

Those who strive to acquire Dīn only from literature can never understand the blessings which are acquired from an assembly.

May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate the status of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and enable people to derive maximum benefit from his *Maʿārif*. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer the best rewards to the compiler of the *Maʿārif*. Āmīn.

Khālid Mahmūd
Jāmiʿah Islāmīyyah, Manchester
25 October 2018.

INTRODUCTION

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على رسوله الذي بعث معلما للكتاب والحكمة، ومزكي نفوس الناس وعلى آله وأصحابه الذين سلكوا مسلك التوحيد والإخلاص. أما بعد.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the introduction to *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* volume one was written by Maulānā Sūfī Zahīr ad-Dīn Sāhib. A long introduction to volume two was written by Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Wādih Rashīd Nadwī *rahimahullāh*, and a comprehensive introduction to volume three was written by Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Abul Qāsim Sāhib Nuʿmānī, principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. A further introduction was written by ʿAllāmah Khālid Mahmūd Sāhib which you just read.

My heart desired that I make a brief mention of those who assisted me in compiling the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This will bring additional joy and happiness to me. I now present their contributions in this regard.

Acting under the instruction of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* proceeded to his hometown. He then began delivering lectures there and in the surrounding towns and villages. These were noted.

When I began residing permanently with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, the following three

personalities were already living in Hadrat's company:

1. Hadrat Maulānā Hakīm Bashīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Kaupāganjī, a student of Hadrat 'Allāmah Muhammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*.
2. Hāfiz Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Fatahpūrī.
3. Master Muhammad 'Īsā Sāhib Hamīdpūrī.

Each one was noting Hadrat's statements and writing fatāwā. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would then scrutinize the fatāwā and hand them over to the person who asked for them or send them by post. Immediately after my arrival at the khānqāh in Fatahpūr, Hadrat commenced the work of writing. For example, *Tahdhīr al-'Ulamā' 'An Khisāl as-Sufahā', al-Usūl an-Nādirah*, etc.

The arrival of Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib

I recall Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* arriving in 1950 and residing permanently with Hadrat. He was appointed to the task of recording Hadrat's statements and writing fatāwā. He fulfilled these duties in a beautiful and excellent manner. During this period the writing of *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq* commenced. Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib and I joined in this work. When it was completed, I was ordered to read it in the presence of the 'ulamā'. I did so with much trepidation but it was highly appreciated by the 'ulamā'. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Not long after Hadrat's arrival in Allāhābād, the house at number 23 Bakhshī Bāzār was purchased. Everyone shifted to this place, and the programme of

writing, reading, teaching and studying commenced. Hadrat also conducted many assemblies and people began attending. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* began performing his salāh in the Dhāl Wālī Masjid and Mahalle Wālī Masjid. He would remain for a long time in the latter masjid and would express his peace and contentment here. Subsequently, I established Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif here. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, it is well run to this day.

Two contributions of Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib

(1)

In addition to purchasing the house in 23 Bakhshī Bāzār, Dr. Sāhib suggested to Hadrat that if the articles which are being written are published in the form of a periodical, all sections of the Muslim community will benefit tremendously. Hadrat was not too keen but Dr. Sāhib continually apprised Hadrat of the benefit of this work. It was due to Dr. Sāhib's sincerity and genuineness that Hadrat eventually agreed to initiate a periodical. *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* was subsequently published. Despite this, Hadrat - in his humility - would repeatedly say that his articles should not be published. Instead, the statements and teachings of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Sayyid ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* ought to be published so that people could benefit from them. Articles of these personalities were thus published in the early issues of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. The statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* were published together with these. The masses and the scholars began expressing their verbal and written approval and appreciation of these articles. This encouraged Hadrat to publish more and more of

these articles and statements so that the Muslim community could benefit from them. This resulted in a large number of subscribers and the periodical made great strides.

(2)

The thought then came in the mind of Dr. Sāhib that if the statements are recorded on tape, then the work of transcribing Hadrat's statements will increase, many of his statements will reach the Muslim community via *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*, and more people will benefit from them. Dr. Sāhib mentioned the tape-recorder to Hadrat and explained its advantages to it. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* deferred the matter by saying: "It is the pages of the hearts which are for the recording of sciences and facts, and not these new inventions."

Nonetheless, Dr. Sāhib was so zealous about it that he spoke about its usefulness time and again to Hadrat. He eventually agreed and - all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* - a tape recorder was obtained. When Hadrat was made to listen to a recording, he was quite pleased and agreed to this arrangement. Hadrat's student, Maulānā ʿAmmār Ahmad Sāhib and I were put in charge of it.

When Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* arrived in his assembly on the first day, he spoke on the following verse in line with the capability of the tape-recorder:

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا فِيْهِ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰوَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هٰذَا الْكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصٰهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا ؕ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا.

The book of records will be placed [before them]. You will then see the sinners afraid of what is written therein and they will say: "Woe to us! What is it with this book that it does not leave out anything small nor big without having enumerated it?!" They will find whatever they did placed before them. Your Sustainer will not wrong anyone.[1]

H̲ad̲rat then spoke about the rank of the seniors and some supernatural feats. The people enjoyed the talk thoroughly and H̲ad̲rat too was quite happy. In fact, it was published separately as a booklet titled *Ījādāt Kī H̲aqīqat*.

We would preserve his statements daily through the tape recorder, transcribe them the same day, and read them to H̲ad̲rat after maghrib. This continued until the very end. In this way, a large treasure of statements was collected. On the other side, the practice of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rah̲mān Jāmī S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* of noting H̲ad̲rat's statements also continued. In this way, H̲ad̲rat's statements were being compiled, published, and people were deriving benefit from them. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Written works

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that H̲ad̲rat's programme of writing had commenced from his

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 49.

hometown, Fatahpūr. During his stay in Fatahpūr, *Tahdhīr al-ʿUlamā’ ʿAn Khisāl as-Sufahā’, al-Usūl an-Nādirah, Wasīyyatul Ihsān*, etc. had already been written. Many other books were written later on, e.g. *Wasīyyatul Ikhlās, Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, etc. These have been collated and printed in five volumes under the title *Ta’līfāt-e-Muslihul Ummat.* Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib strove especially hard in its compilation. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Tilāwat-e-Qur’ān is a summary of Hadrat’s talks which were given in the month of Ramadān. I collated this book and presented it to Hadrat. He was overjoyed and said: “This is a book through which many people could become close friends of Allāh *taʿālā*.” Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib collated the talks of another Ramadān and compiled them under the title *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. It was highly appreciated by the masses and the scholars. I wrote a book titled *Iʿtirāf Qusūr* and published it with *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. I also compiled *Ījādāt Kī Haqīqat* and *Amr bil Maʿrūf Wa Nahy ʿAnil Munkar*. I make duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* to make these a means for my success in the Hereafter and to confer Hadrat with the highest stages in Paradise. After all, he enlightened the Muslim community with such beneficial themes from which we are benefiting to this day. In the course of reading them, I constantly make duʿā’ for Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for have noted them and provided us with such a treasure. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* two volumes of this book have been published and the third book is also ready for printing. I make duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable not only these three volumes but more to be

printed and be a source of benefit for the Muslim community. Āmīn.

This important work commenced when my son, Maulānā Mah̲būb Ah̲mad Nadwī (a grandson of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*) said to me: "If my beloved grandfather's statements which are lying scattered over many years' of periodicals are collated, simplified and rearranged, then-inshā Allāh-the masses and the scholars will benefit from them." What he said made a lot of sense and it was therefore essential to accept it. My friends and associates gladly accepted this advice and Maulānā Mah̲būb Ah̲mad and Muftī Zayn al-Islam commenced with it. Several periodicals were collated and specific articles were separated. They had just started the work when Muftī Zayn al-Islam was offered a job at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband in the iftā' department. He left and began serving the iftā' department there. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

The work was then undertaken by Maulānā S̲ābir ʿAlī S̲āh̲ib Qāsimī, Maulānā Kamāl Ah̲mad Nadwī and Maulānā Mah̲būb Ah̲mad Nadwī. After reading the articles carefully, they would hand them over to me. I would then study them deeply, simplify and rearrange them. I had to put more efforts in doing this than in writing my own work. This is because H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* had clearly stated: "Study my articles carefully and, if you see the need, you have the right to make changes. I do not want my articles to contain anything which would leave room for later peoples to make objections. Points of this nature have crept into the statements of our seniors resulting in people making objections to them."

I make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable me to carry out this task as per H̲ad̲rat's good thoughts about me, to crown it with acceptance, and to make it beneficial to the entire Muslim community especially to those who are affiliated to him. Āmīn.

Was salām
Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
25 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1440 A.H.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE[1]

There has been a constant battle between knowledge and ignorance. It was on the basis of knowledge and ignorance that battles were fought between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are the bearers of knowledge, while the rejecters have been the flag bearers of ignorance. The Prophets' sole objective was to proliferate knowledge. They were given this responsibility by Allāh *taʿālā*, and so, they carried it out. The unbelievers - acting under the dictates of their carnal self – opposed them. Their own ignorance prevented them from giving up their ancestral ignorance, self-worship and ignorant customs. The conflict between knowledge and ignorance sometimes took a very dangerous turn. If you were to think about it, you will find that this conflict always existed in this world; not only with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* but with their deputies as well. The thing which is intrinsic to the original will be intrinsic to the deputy as well.

If you were to ponder about it, you will notice that even though some people have been Muslims for centuries, when the ʿulamā' present the Sharīʿat to them, they become antagonistic towards them. They display their total ignorance in their treatment of the ʿulamā'. This is why very few people are free from this conflict.

We conclude from this that the propagation of knowledge is no easy task. People of every era have

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[1] A very important article which ought to be studied carefully by ʿulamā'. (compiler)

been saying the same thing. The author of *Mirqāt* writes:

في شرح السنة عن الثوري ما أعلم اليوم شيئا أفضل من طلب العلم، قيل ليس لهم نية، قال طلبهم له نية، أي سببها، ولذا قال بعضهم: طلبنا العلم لغير الله فأبى أن يكون إلا لله.

The following statement of Hadrat Sufyān ath-Thaurī rahimahullāh is quoted in Sharh as-Sunnah: "At present, I do not know of anything which is superior to seeking knowledge." Someone said to him: "The intention of students is not correct." He replied: "Their mere seeking of knowledge is a good intention." In other words, it is the cause of the intention. This is why someone said: "We sought knowledge for reasons other than Allāh, but knowledge ensured that it is solely for Allāh." (It refused to be for any reason other than Allāh).

وعن الشافعي طلب العلم أفضل من الصلوة النافلة.

Hadrat Imām Shāfi'ī rahimahullāh said: Seeking knowledge is superior to optional salāh.

This clearly demonstrates the superiority of knowledge. Another reason for its superiority is that the pain and striving needed for its acquisition are more than the action itself. Acquisition of knowledge is essential because its benefit is more.

Nowadays people think that knowledge is easy while action is difficult. You know that the propagation, proliferation, teaching and acquiring of knowledge have been extremely difficult in every era. This is why I can frankly announce that knowledge is difficult while acting on it is easy. There is more mental

striving and fatigue in the acquisition of knowledge, and mental fatigue is not removed easily. This is why everyone cannot bear this strain. On the other hand, there is no mental fatigue in actions. It is only a physical fatigue which disappears quickly. This is why it is easy.

Yes, if enjoyment develops in seeking knowledge, it becomes easy. The same can be said of worship. When a person enjoys it, it becomes easy for him.

Action is the result of correct knowledge. Correct knowledge certainly brings about action. If any knowledge does not produce action, it is customary knowledge which does not deserve any consideration. Correct knowledge invariably results in action. Action is preceded by knowledge. If there is a deficiency in action, one can conclude that there is a deficiency in the fundamental, i.e. in knowledge. After all, action is a corollary of knowledge. If knowledge is complete, so will the action. If knowledge is deficient, so will be the action. In short, the level of action will be reciprocal to the level of knowledge. This is why I said that action is easy while knowledge is difficult. Observe the following example which demonstrates how knowledge is difficult while action is easy.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, all those who are sitting here at the moment are people of action. They have performed the ishrāq salāh and come here. There may also be those who performed tahajjud salāh. However, there will be very few who will be understanding this lecture of mine. If you went outside and asked them: "What did he (Hadrat) say?" I don't think there will be anyone who will be able to repeat my lecture correctly. This is because it is difficult to preserve knowledge. Preserving knowledge, understanding it, enabling others to

understand and conveying it correctly requires experience and constant practice.

The disharmony which we presently see in the madāris is essentially a battle between knowledge and ignorance. I made reference to this previously. This is why students too are not particularly affected by knowledge.

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth. When wealth is given to a person, he becomes indebted. However, we cannot understand how a student does not accept the favour of knowledge. We find people according the same respect to their teachers as they do to the spiritual mentors. This is because they acquired knowledge from them, and there is no wealth greater than knowledge. Knowledge has turned them into their slaves. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من علمني حرفا صيّرني عبدا.

The one who teaches me a single letter turns me into his slave.

This is my proof for what I said.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *rahimahullāh* says with reference to knowledge and the people of knowledge:

إن الله سبحانه شرف أهل العلم ورفع أقدارهم وعظم مقدارهم ودل على ذلك الكتاب والسنة والإجماع، بل قد اتفق العقلاء على فضيلة

العلم وأهله وأنهم المستحقون شرف المنازل، وهو مما لا ينازع فيه عاقل.[١]

Allāh taʿālā honoured the people of knowledge, raised their value and elevated their ranks. The Qur'ān, Sunnah and Ijmāʿ - all – make reference to it. In fact, the intelligentsia concur on the superiority of knowledge and those who possess it. They are certainly eligible for the noble ranks regarding which no intelligent person can dispute.

I feel it appropriate to present a few Ahādīth on the virtues of knowledge.

عن أبي هريرة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: أفضل الصدقة أن يتعلم المرء المسلم علما ثم يعلمه أخاه المسلم.[٢]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The most superior form of charity is for a person to learn something and then teach it to his Muslim brother.

عَنْ أَيُّوْبَ بْنِ مُوْسَى عَنْ أَبِيْهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدَهُ مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ.[٣]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "No parent gave his children anything better than sound etiquette (in other words, Islamic knowledge)."

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ٣٢٠.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٢، ص ٣٧.

[3] سنن الترمذي: ص ٣، ٥٠٣، ١٩٥٢. السنن الكبرى للبيهقي: ٣: ٨٤.

قال الشامي وروى البيهقي عن ابن عمر ما عبد الله بشيء أفضل من فقه في دين.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī ra<u>h</u>imahullāh said that al-Bayhaqī narrated from <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Ibn ʿUmar ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu who said: No one worshipped Allāh taʿālā in a way better than by deep understanding of Dīn.

وفي البزازية طلب العلم والفقه إذا صحت النية أفضل من جميع أعمال البر. وكذا الاشتغال بزيادة العلم إذا صحت النية لأنه أعم نفعا لكن بشرط أن لا يدخل النقصان في فرائضه.

It is stated in al-Bazzāzīyyah that seeking knowledge and fiqh is superior to all good actions provided the intention is correct. The same can be said with regard to increasing one's knowledge if the intention is correct. The reason for this is that knowledge has a more all-embracing benefit. However, the precondition is that there must be no shortcoming in carrying out obligatory actions.

وصحة النية أن يقصد بها وجه الله تعالى لا يطلب المال والجاه.

Correctness of intention means that the person must desire Allāh's pleasure and not seek wealth and position.

It is far<u>d</u>-e-ʿayn to learn the essentials of fiqh

ولو أراد الخروج من الجهل ومنفعة الخلق وإحياء العلم فقيل تصح نيته أيضا. من تعلم بعض القرآن ووجد فراغا فالأفضل الاشتغال

بالفقه لأن حفظ القرآن فرض كفاية وتعلم ما لا بد من الفقه فرض عين.

If a person has the intention of coming out of ignorance, benefiting the creation and reviving knowledge, it will be said that his intention is also correct. When a person learns a portion of the Qur'ān and finds the spare time, then it will be preferable for him to occupy himself with fiqh because memorization of the Qur'ān is fard-e-kifāyah while learning the essential rules of fiqh is fard-e-ʿayn.

قال في الخزانة وجميع الفقه لا بد منه. قال في المناقب عمل محمد بن الحسن مأتي ألف مسئلا في الحلال والحرام لا بد للناس من حفظها.[١]

It is stated in al-Khazānah that it is essential to learn all aspects of fiqh. It is said in al-Manāqib that Muhammad ibn Hasan wrote 200 000 rules related to halāl and harām. It is essential for people to learn them.

Another Hadīth is now related:

قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، لَأَنْ تَغْدُوَ فَتُعَلِّمَ آيَةً مِنْ كِتَابِ اللهِ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ مِائَةَ رَكْعَةٍ. وَلَأَنْ تَغْدُوَ فَتُعَلِّمَ بَابًا مِنَ الْعِلْمِ – عُمِلَ بِهِ أَوْ لَمْ يُعْمَلْ – خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ أَلْفَ رَكْعَةٍ.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: O Abū Dharr! Learning a single verse of the Qur'ān is better for you than performing 100 rakʿats of [optional] salāh. If you go to learn just one chapter of [Islamic]

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[1] الشامي: ج ٥، ص ٢٧٠.

knowledge – whether you practise on it or not – is better for you than performing 1 000 rakʿats of [optional] salāh.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* established two levels of learning in this Hadīth. One is to learn a verse of the Qur'ān. This is necessary because the preservation of the Qur'ān is necessary. Allāh *taʿālā* has taken the responsibility for it and makes reference to it as follows:

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهُ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ

It is We Ourselves who revealed this admonition and We are its protectors.[1]

Furthermore, salāh is dependent on the recitation of the Qur'ān. Learning the Qur'ān thus becomes a department of knowledge and it has its own virtue. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* encouraged towards it by saying that learning a single verse is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional salāh. However, the sciences and injunctions which are derived from these verses are far more superior to memorizing the Qur'ān. This is because these sciences and injunctions are the foundations of Dīn. Knowledge of the salient features of Dīn are related to them. Occupying one's self in them is therefore superior. Learning one chapter of knowledge is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional salāh so that people develop an interest in learning the sciences of the Qur'ān and they pay more attention to it.

The difference in the two levels was not clearly understood from the words "If you go to learn just

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[1] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 9.

one chapter of [Islamic] knowledge…" We therefore referred to the commentaries and explanations to see what the commentators say about it, and how they differentiate the two levels. However, we could not find a complete elucidation in any book. Incidentally, I looked at *ash-Shāmī* today and came across an exceptional investigation on the subject of backbiting. It fully explains the rules and regulations related to backbiting, and the meaning of the present Hadīth becomes totally clear.

Take the following instruction of Allāh *taʿālā* as an example:

وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

Do not backbite each other.

There are two levels of learning this verse of the Qur'ān. One is you memorize it. This is a branch of knowledge in itself. For it, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional salāh. Then we come to actually understanding the theme of this verse and what backbiting means. What are its limits? When is it permissible? When is it not? What are the different types of backbiting? To learn the detailed rulings in this regard is a chapter of knowledge in itself. Mere memorizing of the verse will not suffice for this. Rather, a person will have to understand its meaning, refer to the writings of the jurists and see what their verdicts are in this regard.

You people must have known this verse for a long time but you probably know nothing about the detailed injunctions of backbiting and what it really means. After reading what ʿAllāmah Shāmī *rahimahullāh* wrote, a new chapter of knowledge has

been opened and we learnt that understanding a verse is superior to memorizing it. This is why the reward for the former is multiplied by ten.

You can understand the following verse in the same way. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ

Establish s̲alāh and pay zakāh.

If you memorize this verse, you would have acquired some knowledge and it equals 100 rakʿats of optional s̲alāh. However, there is another knowledge related to it. That is, the pillars of s̲alāh and zakāh, the prerequisites, the obligatory actions, etc. You learnt and memorized all these. You obviously bore many difficulties in learning all this. The reward is therefore more than what you would receive for only memorizing it. It is on this basis that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is superior to 1 000 rakʿats of optional s̲alāh.

The explanation of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī S̲āh̲ib Dehlawī *rah̲imahullāh* is now quoted with its translation:

قال المحشي: الحديث يدل على أن تعلم العلم خير من كثرة الأعمال لأن تعلم آية خير من مائة ركعة، ولهذا قال صلى الله عليه وسلم العلماء ورثة الأنبياء. وقال أحمد الجامي للشيخ المودود الجستي الصوفي الجاهل مسخرة للشياطين فاذهب تعلم العلم أولا ثم أرشد الناس إلى سبيل الرشاد كما كان آباءك يفعلون.

This H̲adīth shows that acquiring knowledge is superior to many actions. This is because learning a

single verse is superior to 100 rakʿats of salāh. This is why Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets." Ahmad al-Jāmī said to Shaykh al-Maudūd al-Chishtī: "An ignorant Sufi is a toy in the hands of the devils. You should therefore go and acquire knowledge first and then guide people towards the right path as your forefathers had been doing."

ودل الحديث أيضا على أن العالم إن لم يعمل بعلمه بحيث جاءه الموت بغتة أو اشتغل في تعليم الناس بحيث فاته الأعمال جوزي بمثل ما جوزي العامل.

This Hadīth also makes reference to the fact that if a scholar could not practise on his knowledge and death comes upon him suddenly, or he was so immersed in teaching people that he left out many (optional) good actions, then he will be rewarded with the same reward given to the one who was doing those good actions.

ولذا قال فقهاؤنا إن العالم إذا صار مرجعا للناس وسعه ترك السنن الرواتب ولم يجز له أن يخرج إلى الغزوة والجهاد إذا لم يكن في البلد عالم غيره.

This is why our jurists say that if a scholar becomes a reverting point for the masses, he is given the concession of leaving out the supererogatory exercises of devotion. And it is not permissible for him to go out in jihād if there is no other scholar in his town.

وفي الحديث دليل أيضا على أن تعلم العلم خير من تعلم القرآن إذا قرأ ما يصح به الصلوة بعشرة درجة، ولذا قال الفقهاء الحنفية يؤم القوم أقرأهم.[1]

In this Hadīth there is also proof that learning knowledge is superior to learning the Qur'ān by ten times provided the person already knows that amount of the Qur'ān with which salāh is valid. This is why our Hanafī jurists say that (the one who has most knowledge of the Qur'ān should lead the people in salāh) and then the one who reads the best.

Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* stated that when a scholar is a reverting point for the masses, he is given the concession of leaving out the supererogatory practices of devotion. This does not apply to leaving out all the Sunan. Rather, the Sunnat of fajr is excluded. Furthermore, leaving out the others will only be permitted when he has such a large number of students and people posing questions to him that he has no time to do anything else. Leaving out the Sunnat of fajr and congregational salāh will not be permitted even in such a situation. The statements of the jurists are now presented:

في البحر الرائق وفي النهاية قال مشائخنا العالم إذا صار مرجعا في الفتوى يجوز له ترك سائر السنن لحاجة الناس إلى فتواه إلا سنة

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[1] إنجاح الحاجة حاشية ابن ماجه: ٢٠.

الفجر.[1] وفي در المختار ولا يجوز تركها لعالم صار مرجعا في الفتاوى بخلاف باقي السنن.

قال الشامي (قوله فله تركها الخ) الظاهر أن معناه أنه يترك وقت اشتغاله بالإفتاء لأجل حاجة الناس المجتمعين عليه وينبغي أن يصليها إذا فرغ في الوقت، وظاهر التفرقة بين سنة الفجر وغيرها أنه ليس له ترك الجماعة لأنها من الشعائر فهي آكد من سنة الفجر، ولذا يتركها لو خاف فوت الجماعة، وأفاد أنه ينبغي أن يكون القاضي وطالب العلم كذلك لا سيما المدرس نظر بخلاف الطالب إذا خاف فوت المدرس أو بعضه تأمل.[2]

Note: This is an immensely beneficial and comprehensive quotation. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for having drawn our attention to many such texts. Āmīn. (compiler)

Now that you have understood the nobility and virtue of knowledge, you must understand that knowledge is to be obtained solely from those who possess it. Every person is not of a level whereby knowledge could be acquired from him.

ʿAllāmah Hāfiz Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Isʿāf al-Mubatta'*:

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[1] البحر الرائق: ج ٢، ص ٥١. وهكذا في الفتاوى العالمكيرية: ج ١، ص ٨٨.

[2] الشامي: ج ١، ص ٤٥٤.

قال معن بن عيسى كان مالك يقول لا يؤخذ العلم من أربعة، ويؤخذ من سوى ذلك. لا يؤخذ من سفيه، ولا يؤخذ من صاحب هوى يدعو الناس إلى هواه، ولا من كذاب يكذب في أحاديث الناس وإن كان لا يتهم على أحاديث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، ولا من شيخ له فضل وصلاح وعبادة إذا كان لا يعرف ما يحدث.

Maʿn ibn ʿĪsā rahimahullāh said that Imām Mālik rahimahullāh used to say: Knowledge should not be acquired from four types of people, but it could be acquired from others. (1) A foolish person. (2) A person who follows his desires and invites people towards them. (3) A liar who speaks lies about the conversations of people even if he is not accused of speaking lies against the Ahādīth of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. (4) An old man who does not know what he is saying even if he is a man of virtue, rectitude and worship.

Look at the general principle which Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* laid down as regards from whom you should acquire knowledge and from whom you should not.

The greatness of Hadrat Ibn Shihāb

During the era of Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* there were many personalities who used to relate the Ahādīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Despite this, Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said that knowledge of Hadīth should not be acquired from all and sundry. Rather, it should be acquired from specific people. The following is stated in *Isʿāf al-Mubatta'*:

قال إسماعيل بن أبي أويس سمعت خالي مالكا يقول: إن هذا العلم دين فانظروا عمن تأخذوا دينكم. لقد أدركت سبعين ممن يقول قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عند هذا الأساطين. فما أخذت عنهم شيئا وإن أحدهم لو ائتمن على بيت مال لكان به أمينا لأنهم لم يكونوا من أهل هذا الشأن. فقدم علينا ابن شهاب فكنا نزدحم على بابه.

*Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Uways said: I heard my uncle, Imām Mālik ra*h*imahullāh, saying: This knowledge (of the Qur'ān and Sunnat) is Dīn. You should therefore check carefully from whom you are acquiring your Dīn. I came across 70 such persons who were at these pillars (of Masjid-e-Nabawī) saying: 'Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said…' but I did not take anything from them (even though their trustworthiness was of such a level) that if any of them was entrusted with the public treasury he would have proved to be trustworthy (he would not have acted treacherously in the least). However, I did not take knowledge from them because they were not of this lofty field. Yes, when Ibn Shihāb arrived, we used to crowd at his door.*

Did you see what Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said!? He came across 70 scholars relating Ahādīth near the pillars of Masjid-e-Nabawī but he did not take knowledge from them because the greatness of knowledge is much higher; every person cannot be worthy of it. Every person cannot be relied upon to convey exactly the Dīn which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came with. It requires deep understanding and a strong memory. In addition to

this, the person must possess the qualities of justice and integrity. Very few people possess these qualities collectively. Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* observed trustworthiness in them in the sense that if they were entrusted with the public treasury, they would certainly prove their trustworthiness and would not act treacherously at all. However, he did not trust them to relate Ahādīth correctly.

I don't think Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* came to this view from the very beginning. Rather, he must have presented himself before them and attended their classes. When he realized the absence of deep understanding in them, he concluded that they were not worthy enough for the taking of knowledge from them. This, notwithstanding the fact that they were righteous, honest and ardent worshippers.

The fact of the matter is that Allāh *taʿālā* had willed for Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* to become a leader and an Imām, and for his madh-hab to remain until the day of Resurrection. He needed teachers who combined the sciences of Hadīth and fiqh, and who had the ability to derive and extract rulings from Ahādīth. This is why he was not fully satisfied with every teacher. Ibn Shihāb *rahimahullāh* eventually arrived on the scene. He was a man who combined several sciences. He was a master of Hadīth and fiqh. Imām Mālik's thirst was quenched at his stream and he acquired knowledge from him.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* continues:

Look at the virtue and excellence of Ibn Shihāb *rahimahullāh*! It was so well-accepted that there used to be crowds of students at his door.

Note: We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to produce such scholars of virtue and excellence from whom the

people of this world can learn the sciences and knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and be showered by their blessings. Āmīn. (compiler)

Is everyone qualified today?

Just ponder! There were many people narrating Hadīth in the time of Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*, but there were a select few who were fully qualified for it. Now what do you think about today? Is everyone qualified and worthy? Is there no one who is not qualified? Can you go and acquire knowledge from anyone you like without any prerequisites?

Knowledge is not spread like this in the world. It has to be sifted. There have to be tests and examinations. Those who are worthy and qualified are appointed as teachers and lecturers. Why, then, are no rules and principles applied when it comes to knowledge of Dīn? Whereas you ought to be even more cautious in Dīnī knowledge. After all, Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said that this knowledge is Dīn in itself. You should therefore check from whom you are acquiring this knowledge.

The fact of the matter is that a student will turn out to be like his teacher. If a teacher is a fastidious scholar, his students will also be somewhat like him. Furthermore, the religiosity, piety and purity of the teacher certainly have an effect on his students. You should therefore acquire knowledge from a fully qualified and pious teacher. Study under a person who is worthy. Every Tom, Dick and Harry is not qualified and worthy.

In line with the above theme, I quote a text from *al-I'tisām* which is a comprehensive book written by 'Allāmah Shātibī Garnātī *rahimahullāh*.

قال مالك بن أنس: بكى ربيع يوما بكاء شديدا، فقيل له: مصيبة نزلت بك؟ فقال: لا. ولكن استفتي من لا علم عنده.[1]

Hadrat Mālik ibn Anas rahimahullāh relates: Hadrat Rabīʿ cried profusely one day. When someone asked him if a severe calamity had befallen him, he replied: "No. Rather, a question has been posed to a person who has no knowledge."

Note: This is quite common nowadays. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā.* (compiler)

The origin of bidʿat

Imām Rabīʿah *rahimahullāh* cried so profusely that people assumed that a major calamity had befallen him. There is no doubt that when a pious scholar has so much of concern for Dīn, then there can be no worse calamity for him. This is why he thought that qualified scholars no longer existed. If there were, people would not ask for fatwās from unqualified and unworthy people who would then give answers on the basis of their own assumptions and views. They would not refer to the authentic and reliable reference books. They would cast aside the Qur'ān and Sunnat. The inevitable consequence of this will be the proliferation and spread of misguidance and innovations. The fact of the matter is that if the ignoramuses assume the posts of the ʿulamā', then this is in itself a bidʿat. In fact, it is the source of all innovations. Understand this well.

[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

وفي البخاري عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: قبل الساعة سنون خداعا يصدق فيهن الكاذب ويكذب فيهن الصادق، ويخون فيهن الأمين ويؤتمن الخائن، وينطق فيهن الرويبضة، قالوا هو الرجل التافه الحقير ينطق في أمور العامة كأنه ليس بأهل أن يتكلم في أمور العامة فيتكلم.[١]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Before the Resurrection there will be some years of deceit. The liar will be trusted while the honest one will be belied. The trustworthy person will be considered treacherous while the treacherous one will be trusted. The ignoble and despicable person will speak on matters related to the masses, as though there is no one else to speak about them, so he will speak.

Knowledge to unworthy people is destructive

وعن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قال قد علمت من يهلك الناس إذا جاء الفقه من قبل الصغير استعصى عليه الكبير، وإذا جاء الفقه من قبل الكبير تابعه الصغير فاهتديا.[٢]

Hadrat ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "I know who will destroy people." He then said: "When knowledge of Dīn comes from a junior, it will weigh heavily on the seniors. When it comes from the

[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

[2] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

seniors, the juniors will follow them. In this way, both will be guided."

We learn from this that when understanding of Dīn goes away to the juniors, it will weigh heavily on the seniors and they will feel it below them to learn it. People will be destroyed in this way. But when seniors are people of knowledge and understanding, the juniors will obey and follow them. In this way, both will be guided.

قال ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه: لا يزال الناس بخير ما أخذوا العلم من أكابرهم، فإذا أخذه عن أصاغرهم وشرارهم هلكوا.[1]

Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd radiyallāhu 'anhu said: People will remain on goodness as long as they acquire knowledge from their seniors. Once they acquire it from their juniors and mischief makers, they will be destroyed.

'Allāmah Shātibī *rahimahullāh* goes on to write that the 'ulamā' differ with regard to what Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* meant when he mentioned juniors. Ibn Mubārak *rahimahullāh* said that it refers to the people of bid'at. This is correct because the people of bid'at are deficient in knowledge and are juniors in it. The fact of the matter is that a person commits a bid'at because of his deficiency in knowledge. (In other words, if he was an expert in knowledge he would not even have any inclination towards bid'at). Bājī *rahimahullāh* said that juniors refer to those who have no knowledge at all. He also said that Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* used to consult youngsters. His consultative assembly consisted of those who

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

were old and young. It is also possible that the word "juniors" refers to those who are of no value and status. And a person loses his value and status when he discards Dīn and integrity. On the other hand, when a person possesses Dīn and integrity, his status increases.

You can understand from the above that an ʿālim should not impart knowledge to all and sundry. Rather, it must be to the one who is worthy of it, who is noble and who has high aspirations. Ever since these points were not taken into consideration and knowledge of the Qur'ān and Hadīth was imparted to everyone without distinction, the entire work of Dīn became spoilt and messed up. Ignoble people acquired incomplete knowledge and destroyed Dīn. They are neither worthy of doing any work nor do they allow worthy people to carry it out. They are like the desert which neither absorbs water nor provides it to others. The only benefit which they derive from their sub-standard knowledge is that they don the garb of the ʿulamā' and include themselves among them; and nothing else. Their main objective is to be addressed as "Maulānā". Once they realize this objective, they become smug with it. How will Dīn be served by such contemptible and apathetic people!? How will such a noble thing like knowledge be preserved by them? Imparting knowledge to such people is synonymous to giving a sword to thieves and hijackers. In fact, it is worse than that.

The following is stated in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

قال عيسى عليه الصلوة والسلام: لا تعلقوا الجواهر في أعناق الخنازير فإن الحكمة خير من الجواهر ومن كرهها فهو شر من الخنازير.

ولذلك قيل كل لكل عبد بمعيار عقله وزن له بميزان فهمه حتى تسلم منه وينتفع بك والا وقع الإنكار لتفاوت المعيار.

Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām said: Do not hang jewels around the necks of pigs because knowledge is superior to jewels. The one who dislikes it is worse than a pig.

This is why it is said: Measure each person according to his intellect and give him after weighing him according to his understanding. You must do this so that you are safe from him and he benefits from you. If not, it will result in rejection because of a difference in standards.

Note: This is a point of real wisdom. When you address a person according to his understanding and intelligence, he will benefit. If you speak to him in a manner which is beyond his capabilities and understanding, he will not understand you. This will cause him to reject because as the saying goes: "People are enemies of what they do not know." (compiler)

The following is stated in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

وسئل بعض العلماء عن شيء فلم يجب. فقال السائل: أما سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من كتم علما نافعا جاء ملجما يوم القيامة من نار. فقال: أترك اللجام واذهب فإن جاء من يفقه وكتمته فيلجمني، فقد قال الله تعالى: ولا تؤتوا السفهاء أموالكم تنبيها على أن حفظ العلم ممن يفسده ويضره أولى، وليس الظلم في إعطاء غير المستحق بأقل من الظلم في منع المستحق.

An ʿālim was asked about a certain ruling but he did not give an answer. The questioner said to him: "Did you not hear Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saying: 'The person who conceals beneficial knowledge will come on the day of Resurrection bridled with a bridle of fire'?" The ʿālim replied: "Leave the bridle here and go. When a person of sound understanding comes to me and I still conceal knowledge from him, he may bridle me. Because Allāh taʿālā says: 'Do not give your wealth to foolish people.' In it is a warning that knowledge has more right to be safeguarded from a person who will spoil it and cause harm to it. The wrong in giving knowledge to someone who is not worthy of it is not any less than refusing to give it to the one who is worthy of it."

Look at the beautiful reply given by this scholar: If I conceal knowledge from a man of sound understanding, then in the light of this Hadīth I will be eligible for that bridle of fire. As for you, you cannot even understand what I have to say. Of what benefit, then, is there in imparting it to you. In fact, imparting it to you will entail destroying knowledge and wronging it.

Glory to Allāh! He supported his statement with a verse of the Qur'ān. We are prohibited from handing over wealth to orphans until they are of sound understanding. Knowledge is more worthy of protection and preservation. The prohibition of giving it to unworthy people is therefore more emphasised.

The preservation of knowledge

It is essential to preserve knowledge. When knowledge remains, the honour and dignity of the people of knowledge will remain. If not, the people of knowledge will become disgraced and downtrodden.

The only way of preserving it is to keep it away from unworthy people. The following is stated in *Sunan Ibn Mājah*:

عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: لو أن أهل العلم صانوا العلم ووضعوه عند أهله لسادوا به أهل زمانهم لكنهم بذلوه لأهل الدنيا لينالوا به من دنياهم فهانوا عليهم.[1]

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: Had the people of knowledge preserved knowledge and given it to those who were worthy of it, they would have ruled over the people of their time through it. Unfortunately, they gave it to worldly people so that they may acquire of their material possessions. Consequently, they became disgraced and downtrodden by the worldly people.

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* makes reference to excellent points. He encourages the ʿulamā' towards the preservation of knowledge and shows them how to preserve it. That is, for it to be imparted to those who are worthy of it. He states further that as long as ʿulamā' preserve their knowledge, their leadership will remain intact. If not, it will cease and they will be humiliated and disgraced. If an ʿālim's student is unworthy and materialistic, then instead of being a source of pride for the ʿālim, he will cause his disgrace. An ʿālim occupies a certain rank. However, the popularity of his knowledge and virtue in this world is dependent on worthy students who spread out to different corners of the world and become engrossed in the

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[1] سنن ابن ماجه: ٢٣.

work of Dīn. This results in praises for his teacher, all sections of the community speak highly of him, his popularity spreads far and wide, and he becomes beloved and appreciated in the sight of people. They then start following him and he becomes their leader.

The way to preserve knowledge

The annotator to *Sunan Ibn Mājah* states that the manner of preserving knowledge is for ʽulamā' to save themselves from the employ of tyrants and the company of materialists. I say, although he is right, it is for the preservation of the carnal selves of the ʽulamā'. And this is also necessary. However, Hadrat Ibn Masʽūd *radiyallāhu ʽanhu* is referring to the preservation of knowledge which has to be done by keeping it away from unworthy people. This is why after saying "preserved knowledge" he said, "and given it to those who were worthy of it". The manner of preserving knowledge is explained in the second part of the sentence. After all, unworthy people cannot preserve and safeguard anything.

The story of a falcon

There is a famous story of a king who had a falcon which he loved dearly. It flew away one day and went near an old woman who caught hold of it. The woman looked at its crooked beak and thought to herself that it must be quite difficult for the falcon to peck at grains and seeds. She therefore cut off its beak. She then looked at its claws and noticed that they too were curved. She clipped them as well. She continued cutting and clipping at it until she rendered it useless. In the meantime, the workers of the king were searching for his falcon. In the course of their search, they reached the house of the old woman. They caught the falcon and took it to the

king. The king was grief-stricken when he saw the condition in which it was. He instructed for it to be taken outside and an announcement be made: "The person who hands himself over to unworthy people will end up like this falcon."

Did you see! The old woman did not know the value of the falcon so she could not appreciate it. This is why she rendered it useless.

Now can knowledge which is so intricate and deep be preserved by ordinary people? Will it not need capability and proficiency? Will it be preserved by all and sundry? Certainly not.

The Sufis conceal secrets and mysteries

Listen! The Sufis were always particular about concealing their sciences and mysteries from unworthy people. Despite this, some reckless people caused their sciences to become exposed, and this resulted in rejection.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

> Some gnostics state that it is harām for those who are not on our path to read our books. Similarly, it is not permissible for anyone to quote our speech to anyone. He may quote it to the one in whom he has confidence. If a person quotes the speech of the Sufis to one who does not believe in Sufism, the one who quotes it and the one to whom it is quoted will both be cast into the Hell-fire. The Ahlullāh have very vociferously expressed this. They say that the person who exposes their secrets is eligible to be killed. Despite this, the unmindful and heedless ones did not pay

heed, and quoted their speech to unworthy and unqualified people.

Despite all these precautions, heedless people did not desist and conveyed the words of the Sufis to unworthy people. The reason why the Sufis prohibited quoting their words and reading their books is that if people do not understand what they say, they will reject it and they themselves will suffer. Another major reason for this prohibition is that those who are unqualified and have not reached the stations of the Sufis will memorize their words and consider themselves to be qualified. They will then claim to be the equals of the true masters. They will vex pride by relating these things to the masses and convince them to become their followers.

A contemptible person presents the words of the dervishes in an incorrect manner so that he may relate tales to the ignoramuses.

This is why there remains no distinction between the genuine and the counterfeit, and the honest ones have become mixed with the liars. And so, misguidance is spreading. Such claimants are deviated and are misleading others. People are merely learning meaningless things from them. They are adopting the outward while there is no sign of the inward. Consequently, the Dīn is confined to the outward and the Ṯarīqat is becoming obliterated.

I say, the Sufis went into pains in trying to preserve their speech from unworthy people but the latter still conveyed them, and this resulted in harm. Outer knowledge and Dīn will also have to be protected from unworthy people. A lot of importance will have to be given to this. Unfortunately, people did not apply this rule. They conveyed it to unworthy people

for worldly motives. Consequently, they wasted knowledge and disgraced their own selves. As stated by Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslim community to adopt this instruction. Āmīn. (compiler)

The need for correct intention

A correct intention for knowledge and practice is essential for leadership. In other words, there must be no intention for wealth and fame. It was on this basis that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* acquired leadership over the people. And so did the seniors of Dīn. If wealth of worldly people is made the motive, the person will become disgraced and despicable in their sight. We observe this in our times. In addition to having a correct intention, it is essential to accord to knowledge the rank which it deserves and to never consider it inferior to wealth and riches. Furthermore, a man of knowledge is an heir of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. This is no small rank. It must never be considered to be inferior to the rank of wealthy people. If not, this leadership cannot be maintained.

ʿUlamā' are the heirs of the Prophets

According to a Hadīth, the ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. This is why they ought to follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in everything they do. When people observe this in them, they will accept their leadership. Without this, if they want the people to follow them, it will not happen because the masses too know who has sound character and prophetic mannerisms and who does not. As long as they are not satisfied by their internal character, they will generally not follow them solely on the basis of

their knowledge. This attitude of the masses is correct and proper.

Listen! Leadership is no ordinary thing. It comes with much difficulty. It requires a lot of patience and forbearance.

The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

لا يسود سيد بدون ودود يمدح وحسود يقدح.[١]

A person cannot acquire leadership without having followers who praise him and some envious people who speak ill of him.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī *rahimahullāh* explains the reason for this. He says that leadership due to praises is obvious and clearly understood. However, criticism is also essential so that the leader can display the qualities of forbearance and pardon. People emulate him in these qualities, and this results in his leadership.[2]

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent point! Patience, forbearance and pardon are qualities through which a person receives leadership. These are the very same qualities through which the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* received leadership. The ʿulamā' are their deputies, they do not act on their own. This is why they too will receive criticisms from the people and

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[1]الدر المختار: ج ١، ص ١٠٠.

[2] A point comes to my mind. When a leader has people who love and praise him, it brings joy to his heart and energizes him. When people criticize him, it straightens his mind and he becomes purified from pride, deception and other base qualities. He acquires the rank of leadership in this way. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best. (compiler)

they too will have to exercise patience and forbearance during such occasions.

From among the characteristics of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is their independence, severing all types of expectation from the public and relying solely on Allāh *taʿālā*. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* never sought any reward from the public for inviting towards Allāh *taʿālā* and conveying His injunctions. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْئَلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ.

Follow those who do not ask you for any wage and are themselves guided.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

قُلْ لَّا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى.

Say: I do not ask you for any wage for this except friendship with relatives.[1]

Every Prophet *ʿalayhis salām* said:

اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ.

My reward is solely with Allāh.

If the work is for Allāh *taʿālā*, He alone will give the reward and wage for it. It cannot happen that you do some work for one person and someone else pays you for it. Those who are serving Dīn must also have hopes of reward from Allāh *taʿālā* alone; not from the creation.

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 23.

The ʿulamāʾ too must develop this quality within them. That is, they must sever all expectation and greed from the creation, and place their trust in Allāh *taʿālā* alone. When inviting towards Allāh *taʿālā* and conveying knowledge are done for worldly gain, the person will not differentiate between who is worthy and who is not. He will convey his knowledge without any hesitation wherever he expects worldly gain. How will unworthy worldly people value knowledge!? And how will they preserve it!? In this way, knowledge will be wasted.

When worldly people realize that this ʿālim is the seeker and we are the ones who are sought, he is the follower and we are followed, knowledge is imparted in order to acquire wealth from us; they will have no regard whatsoever for such ʿulamāʾ. When the ʿulamāʾ fall in their sight, then no matter how noble a thing they receive, they will not appreciate it. This is what H̲ad̲rat Ibn Masʿūd *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* meant when he said:

لكنهم بذلوه لأهل الدنيا لينالوا به من دنياهم

Unfortunately, they gave it to worldly people so that they may acquire of their material possessions.

In other words, it was out of their greed and avarice that they gave knowledge to worldly people so that they could acquire of their worldly possessions. Because they [ʿulamāʾ] did not value their knowledge, they themselves became disvalued. This is the inevitable consequence of greed. An avaricious person is always disgraced.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

شرف المؤمن صلاته بالليل، وعزه استغناؤه عما في أيدي الناس.

The nobility of a believer lies in his night salāh, and his honour lies in his independence from whatever people own.

If he is not independent of people and is, instead avaricious, how can he enjoy any virtue? He discarded Allāh *taʿālā* for the sake of this world, conveyed Dīn to the wrong people, and made the Dīn a means for acquiring of this dead world; then in addition to displeasing Allāh *taʿālā*, he made the creation unhappy with him. He thus became despicable in their sight.

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من التمس رضى الناس بسخط الله سخط الله عليه وأسخط عليه الناس. وأخرج الطبراني بسند جيد عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله من أسخط الله في رضى الناس سخط الله عليه، وأسخط عليه من أرضاه في سخطه، ومن أرضى الله في سخط الناس رضي الله عنه وأرضى عنه من أسخطه في رضاه حتى يزين قوله وعمله في عينه.[1]

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "When a person seeks the pleasure of people at the expense of Allāh's displeasure, Allāh taʿālā becomes displeased with him and causes people to be displeased with him." At-Tabarānī rahimahullāh related with a sound chain on the authority of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi

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[1] طحاوي على المراقي: ٨.

wa sallam said: "The person who displeases Allāh taʿālā to gain the pleasure of people, Allāh taʿālā becomes displeased with him and causes those whom he tried to please at the expense of His displeasure to become displeased with him. The person who pleases Allāh taʿālā at the expense of people's displeasure, Allāh taʿālā becomes pleased with him and causes those whom he displeased for Allāh's pleasure to become pleased with him. He does this to the extent that his speech and actions become pleasing in their eyes.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* wrote a letter to Hadrat Muʿāwiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in which she said that the person who displeases Allāh *taʿālā* in order to please someone else, then the very same someone else will be empowered over him to cause him harm.[1]

The Ahlullāh serve Dīn for the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā*. They do it with sincerity and devotion. Their gaze is not on people. Subsequently, Allāh *taʿālā* – out of His grace and kindness – confers them with honour and appreciation in the sight of people. People in general begin honouring them.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله إذا أحب عبدا دعا جبرئيل فقال إني أحب فلانا فأحبه، قال فيحبه جبرئيل ثم ينادي في السماء فيقول إن الله يحب فلانا فاحبوه، فيحبه أهل السماء، ثم يوضع له القبول في الأرض، وإذا أبغض عبدا دعا جبرئيل فيقول إني أبغض فلانا فأبغضه، قال فيبغضه جبرئيل ثم

1 *Tirmidhī.*

ينادي في أهل السماء إن الله يبغض فلانا فأبغضوه، قال فيبغضونه ثم يوضع له البغضاء في الأرض. رواه مسلم.[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When Allāh taʿālā loves a certain servant, He summons Jibra'īl and says: "I love such and such person, so you too must love him." Jibra'īl begins loving him and then announces in the heavens: "Allāh loves such and such person, you too must love him." Those dwelling in the heavens start loving him. His acceptance is then placed on earth…

Glory to Allāh! Just look at this lofty position! A servant's honour and acceptance are sent down from the heavens, and he acquires fame and virtue from Allāh *taʿālā*. How can man's quest for fame and wealth from the creation ever compare with what Allāh *taʿālā* sends down!? We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The Ahlullāh do their utmost to conceal their knowledge and virtue, but Allāh *taʿālā* brings it out into the open and spreads their popularity in a manner which is beyond their imagination.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* says in a couplet:

> I tried to obliterate myself and leave no trace of me. Who caused me to become so popular!?

The fact of the matter is that these personalities set right their affair with their Master and established a bond with such an affectionate one from whom there

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٢٥.

is no hint of any harm. It was a very profitable business. The man had cut off his ties with the creation and turned away from people. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* – out of His kindness – conferred him with His special favours in this world and brought into the open whatever he was trying to conceal. There are many incidents of this nature. The one who knows about the lives of the saints will understand it.

Imām Abū Bakr Ja<u>ss</u>ā<u>s</u> Rāzī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* quotes the following <u>H</u>adīth under the commentary of the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَكْتُمُوْنَ

Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن عبدا لو أطاع الله من وراء سبعين حجابا لأظهر الله له ذلك على ألسنة الناس، وكذلك المعصية. وروي أن الله تعالى أوحى على موسى عليه السلام قل لبني إسرائيل يخفوا أعمالهم وعليّ أن أظهرها.

Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: If a person worships Allāh taʿālā behind 70 veils, Allāh taʿālā will certainly bring it out into the open on the tongues of people [they will speak about it]. The same can be said of sinning (He will expose it as well). It is related that Allāh taʿālā said to <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām: "Tell the Banī Isrā'īl to conceal their actions. It is My responsibility to bring them out into the open."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful <u>H</u>adīth. If Allāh *taʿālā* has taken the responsibility of exposing our

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

actions, why should we not choose sincerity and devotion? Why should we worship Him to earn the praises of people? We seek refuge in Allāh! What a false and foolish thing to do! That we worship Allāh *taʿālā* but our focus is on the creation. It becomes even more strange because when the creation comes to know that we are engaging in worship to earn their praises and that we are not sincere in it, they will cast us aside and never believe us to be truly devoted servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. The only time the creation accepts a person is when he worships Allāh *taʿālā* in total devotion to Him alone and he does not focus on the creation in the least. Just look! Those for whom we are striving so much and bearing so many hardships are actually causing our own destruction. To make matters worse, they are not impressed by us. This is solely because we lack sincerity. We already severed our bond with Allāh *taʿālā* [by our lack of sincerity], and now we have fallen from grace in the sight of people! What foolishness!

Choose to be sincere because Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow the sincere ones to be wasted. Sincerity is highly appreciated in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*. Understand this well.

There is one objection at this point. Let me remove it. Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that place knowledge by those who are worthy of it. It obviously refers to knowledge of Dīn. We learn from this that there are two types of people. Some are worthy of Dīnī knowledge while others are not. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم[١]

Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

This shows that it is obligatory on every person to seek knowledge. If every Muslim male and female is obligated to seek knowledge, it shows that worthiness is found in everyone. And Allāh *taʿālā* does not impose on someone anything which is beyond his capacity.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

The answer is this: There are two levels of knowledge. One level is the one which has to be acquired by every person. For example, the rules of ablution, taking a bath, salāh, fasting, etc. Since these actions are obligatory and carrying them out without knowledge is not possible, acquiring knowledge of their rules becomes obligatory. This is known as fard-e-ʿayn – no one is excused in this regard. It is with regard to this level of knowledge that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم[٢]

Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

The other level of knowledge is this: After learning the essentials of Dīn [in the first level of knowledge], a person studies further so that he becomes an expert in the sciences of the Sharīʿat. He learns the principles of Dīn and jurisprudence, he extracts

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[1] مشكوة، كتاب العلم: ٣٤.

[2] مشكوة، كتاب العلم: ٣٤.

rulings, derives general principles from specific incidents, and so on. This level is fard-e-kifāyah. In other words, there has to be some people who become experts in the various sciences so that they can inform the rest of the Muslim community on rulings of the Sharī'at at every occasion.

The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

واعلم أن تعلم العلم يكون فرض عين وهو بقدر ما يحتاج لدينه، وفرض كفاية وهو ما زاد عليه لنفع غيره، ومندوبا وهو التبحر في الفقه.

If someone comes to an 'ālim to learn or asks him a question about knowledge which is obligatory on the person to learn, it is the duty of the 'ālim to teach him or answer his question. It is not permissible for him to conceal that knowledge. But if the knowledge is not of that level, i.e. it is beyond the level of fard-e-'ayn, the 'ālim has the choice to teach it to whomever he wants and decline whomever he wants. In other words, if he feels that a person is worthy of it, he may teach it to him. If not, he may refuse.

The following is stated in *Majma' al-Bihār*:

من سئل عن علم فكتمه ألجمه الله أي ما يلزم تعليمه ويتعين عليه كمن يريد الإسلام أو تعليم الصلوة أو فتوى الحل والحرمة فالممتنع منه يستحق جزاء وفاقا لأنه أمسك نفسه بالسكوت عن العلم فيعاقب بالإلجام بالنار، وأما نوافل العلم فهو مخير في تعليمها.[1]

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[1] مجمع البحار: ٤٢٠.

Dīnī knowledge must be protected from a mean person

It is with reference to the second level that Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that it must be given to the one who is worthy of it. It must be protected from a mean person because if it is given to him, he will neither value it nor preserve it. Furthermore, he will not develop within himself the qualities and characteristics which are suited to it. To make matters worse, he will demand of people to follow and emulate him. In this way, he will be deviated and will misguide others as well. In reality, such a person is not an ʿālim even if he may claim to be one or people – due to their ignorance – consider him to be from among the ʿulamā'. He is not a genuine ʿālim in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Instead, he is astray and leading others astray. He is an ignoramus. It is through such people that differences and innovations came about. When knowledge reaches the level of perfection, its effects are seen accordingly. When knowledge is imperfect and ignorance remains, the evil effects of that ignorance also manifest themselves.

I now quote a few texts from *al-Iʿtisām* in line with the above discussion:

واعلموا أن الإختلاف في بعض القواعد الكلية لا يقع في العاديات الجارية بين المتبحرين في علم الشريعة الخائضين في لجتها العظمى، العالمين مواردها ومصادرها.

Generally a difference of opinion does not occur in general principles among those who have deep knowledge of the Sharīʿat, who have dived in its

depths, and who have knowledge of the circumstances and sources of those principles.

This is why we do not see many differences in the first era of Islam and in the major portion of the second era. They occurred later on. There are many reasons for it. One of them is:

(أحدها) أن يعتقد الإنسان في نفسه أو يعتقد فيه أنه من أهل العلم والإجتهاد في الدين (ولم يبلغ تلك الدرجة) فيحمل على ذلك ويعد رأيه رأيا وخلافه خلافا.

A person feels or others believe that he is an ʿālim and a mujtahid in Dīn (whereas he has not reached that level). Consequently, he acts accordingly. His view is considered to be the correct view, and so is his disagreement.

In other words, as regards matters of Dīn, he considers his view to be the correct one and feels that he is correct in differing with the ʿulamā'. Those who follow him also believe the same whereas he is not even worthy of such a position. In this way many unqualified people consider themselves to be qualified, establish a following for themselves, and this results in many splinter groups and differences.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raẖimahullāh* writes further:

وعليه نبه الحديث الصحيح أنه صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا يقبض الله العلم انتزاعا ينتزعه من الناس، ولكن يقبض العلم بقبض العلماء

حتى إذا لم يبق عالم اتخذ الناس رؤسا جهالا فسئلوا فافتوا بغير علم فضلوا وأضلوا.[١]

An authentic H̲adīth draws our attention to this. Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Allāh taʿālā does not take away knowledge by snatching it completely from people. Rather, He takes it away by causing ʿulamā' to die one after the other until there remains no ʿālim. People then appoint ignoramuses as their leaders who, when they are posed questions, issue verdicts without knowledge. They are astray and they lead others astray.

قال بعض أهل العلم تقدير هذا الحديث يدل على أنه لا يؤتى الناس قط من قبل علماءهم وإنما يؤتون من قبل أنه إذا مات علماءهم أفتى من ليس بعالم فيوتى الناس من قبله وقد صرف هذا المعنى تصريفا فقيل ما خان أمين قط ولكنه ائتمن غير أمين فخان.

قال ونحن نقول ما ابتدع عالم قط ولكن استفتى من ليس بعالم.[٢]

A scholar said: This H̲adīth shows that people are never put into misery by their ʿulamā'. Rather, they are put into misery when their ʿulamā' pass away. This results in non-ʿulamā' issuing verdicts and thereby putting the masses into misery. The same meaning is reversed and it is said: A trustworthy person never acted treacherously. Rather, a

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

[2] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

treacherous person was entrusted, and so he committed treachery.

The same scholar said: No ʿālim ever committed a bidʿat. Rather, a person who was not an ʿālim was asked for a verdict.

Observe these noteworthy points. Misguidance did not come from the ʿulamā'. Rather, it came from those who are listed among the ʿulamā' while they are not ʿulamā' in reality. They are the ones who issue verdicts against the Qur'ān and Hadīth which cause people to do things against the Sharīʿat. This is why when an unqualified person was asked for a fatwā, Hadrat Rabīʿah *rahimahullāh* cried profusely [this incident was related previously] and exclaimed: "A person who is not qualified is being asked for a fatwā! A person who does not have knowledge is asked a question! This shows that qualified people no longer exist; this is why their places have been occupied by unqualified people. There is no good for the Muslims now. These unworthy fellows separate Dīn from the people and immerse them in irreligiousness; they remove them from the Sunnat and drown them in bidʿat. They will destroy Dīn and the people of Dīn. Nothing will be preserved and protected." Hadrat Rabīʿah *rahimahullāh* thought of all these things and cried as though a major calamity had befallen him.

ʿAllāmah Shātibī *rahimahullāh* goes on to say that if you observe carefully, you will realize that those who committed bidʿat from among the theologians were either the offspring of prisoners or non-Arabs. They were neither from Arab progenies nor was Arabic their language. This is why they could not understand the Qur'ān correctly nor could they fathom the import of what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

ʿalayhi wa sallam said. They took meanings which were different from what he intended. Consequently, there was a proliferation of innovations. The masses considered the very same innovations to be part of Dīn and of the Sunnat. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

The text of what ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raẖimahullāh* said above reads as follows:

ولعلك إذا استقررت أهل البدع من المتكلمين أو أكثرهم وجدتهم من أبناء سبايا الأمم ومن ليس لهم إصالة في اللسان العربي. فعما قريب يفهم كتاب الله على غير وجهه كما أن من لم يتفقه في مقاصد الشريعة فهمها على غير وجهها.[1]

These are the statements of our seniors. Look at the wisdom and insight on which they are based! If these statements are borne in mind today and practised upon, the task at hand will be accomplished. This is especially so with the statement of H̲ad̲rat Ibn Masʿūd *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* which he made with regard to the preservation of knowledge and giving it to those who are worthy of it. The ʿulamā' in particular should keep it in mind and practise on it. Allāh willing, they will observe a marked difference.

Because these teachings are not applied today, we find students neither acquiring knowledge nor rectifying their character and mannerisms. Furthermore, because they are mean, then let alone obeying and accepting their teachers, they emerge as their antagonists. On the other hand, because

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

students of the past were worthy students, they used to love their teachers from whom they acquired knowledge and practice, and were prepared to lay their lives for them. Just look at the deplorable situation today! To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

When our seniors differentiated between those who were worthy and those who were not and emphasised this point, they did it because the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. If they are deficient in practice and beliefs, they will lead others astray. If they are devoid of correct knowledge and practice, what benefit will they convey to others?

The corruption of 'ulamā' is not self-contained; it is infectious. When their evil actions are observed, how many more will commit evil actions! In fact, how many more will adopt corrupt beliefs! There are people who said: "I lost confidence in Islam after observing the actions of such and such person. I learnt that this is Dīn and this is Islam." This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* severely castigated deviated 'ulamā' and warned us against them. He said:

أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان.

The one whom I fear the most for my community is the hypocrite who is eloquent in his language.

The one who is eloquent in his speech and has oratory skills is able to deceive people through his eloquence. This is what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* feared because it will result in people following him after considering him to be an 'ālim. It will cause their falling into misguidance.

Note: This is generally the norm. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The effect of the rectitude and corruption of ʿulamāʾ and rulers

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are two groups of my ummat; if they are in order everyone else will come into order. When they are corrupted, everyone else will become corrupted. They are the rulers and the ʿulamāʾ."[1]

The ʿulamāʾ are like salt

Hadrat Qatādah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that ʿulamāʾ are likened to salt. When something is about to get spoilt, it is set right with salt. However, if the salt is in itself spoilt, how will it be set right?[2]

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful example! There can be no better example than it. Undoubtedly, if the ʿulamāʾ are upright, it is impossible for the masses not be the same. The fault lies with us. Sometimes we become the causes of misguidance just as the ʿulamāʾ of the past were the causes of guidance. The reason is that they adhered strictly to Dīn and followed the Sharīʿat. This is why people received guidance from them. The author of *al-Kashshāf* writes:

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[1] الجامع الصغير: حديث: ٥٠٣٠.

[2] إقتضاء العلم والعمل: ص ١١٤.

ألا ترى أن المتقدمين من العلماء والكبراء إذا كانوا على السداد كيف يتسببون لسداد من ورائهم.[1]

Do you not see how when the ʿulamā' and seniors of the past were upright, they became the causes of uprightness of those who came after them?

The gist of the discussion is that ʿulamā' must practise on their knowledge. When the laymen see the ʿulamā' practising, it will become a cause of their rectification and religiosity. If they see a conflict between the words and actions of the ʿulamā', the actual greatness and value of Dīn will leave their hearts. They will give up actions completely and become irreligious.

The misdeeds of the ʿulamā' befalls their own selves and is also contagious. This shows how essential it is for ʿulamā' to be wary of misdeeds. It is hoped that the reader will benefit from these points. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Note: By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, these are most enlightening and admonitory words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It is necessary for all of us, especially the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, to practise on them. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

[1] الكشاف: ج ١، ص ٩٤.

THE ULAMĀ' ARE THE HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS (1)

I received a letter from a person; I am reading it to you:

> It is difficult for me to describe whatever I received from Hadrat's service. What I do know is that I received a lot. Also, it is something which cannot be seen, cannot be written down nor be given a name. There is no way of fathoming it apart from tearing open the heart. It is only a spiritual physician who can understand it. My eyes were so hungry to see Hadrat that they used to gaze at you surreptitiously. When Hadrat would be hidden away from my eyes, my heart would become even more restless. It would seem as though these eyes hadn't set eyes on Hadrat as yet. Whenever I set eyes on Hadrat, my heart would experience immense joy and my eyes would experience a coolness and an effulgence. There was no end to the restlessness and anxiety of the heart. My heart and mind were at a loss and perplexed. I am now really learning what is to be found in the service of the saints.
>
> As for whatever sincerity I obtained, that is beyond description. Every part of my body was thinking of Hadrat. The same emotions were experienced when I was travelling. The heart is now feeling

desolate, as though it has left the spring season and entered autumn.

Allāhu Akbar! If these are the effects of merely looking at Hadrat's blessed body, what can be said of the effects of Hadrat's speech, practices and īmān! How unfortunate! In the presence of an ocean, one is trying to quench one's thirst from a drop of water. Our condition is beyond the limits. If this is not misguidance, what else can it be!

After believing in Hadrat to be from the Ahlullāh, people are falling like moths at his feet; and their number is increasing by the day. Why should this not be so when the gazes always fall on the special servants of Allāh!?

May Allāh *taʿālā* enable Hadrat's shadow to remain for a long time over us so that we can continue deriving external and spiritual bounties for as long as we live. I request Hadrat to make duʿā' for mad men like me so that spiritual bounties may shower on us and we are able to follow in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with absolute devotion.

May we obtain a portion of Hadrat's spiritual effulgence. I hope that Hadrat will not deprive mad beggars like myself. I make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* makes me a true lover of Hadrat in the true sense of the word and that I am able to fulfil the spiritual practices as prescribed by Hadrat.

I always abstained from informing my wife about Hadrat because, being a woman, I do not know what she would construe or misconstrue. She somehow came to know that I will be coming to Hadrat. I do not know from where this thought came to her mind, and she repeatedly asked me to write to Hadrat to make her a murīd. She said she does not know for how long she is going to live. Just as she has everything else, she would like to become a murīd as well. She asked me persistently to write to Hadrat. Hadrat! I was overjoyed when I heard her, and I thought to myself that Allāh *taʿālā* placed such a great thing in her heart. All thanks are due solely to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I therefore beg before Hadrat to accept the bayʿat of my wife Jamīlah Begum and to admit her in the spiritual family. She too may become attached to this work and we both may become your true disciples. I beg Hadrat to make duʿā' for success in both worlds for the two of us, and for Allāh *taʿālā* to confer us with religiosity. I also request Hadrat to make duʿā' that we are able to take care of each other. We have none apart from you.

Was salām.

Whatever he wrote in this letter and the conditions which he described are all factual, they cannot be denied. When we speak out against anything, it is against customs and those who follow customs. Those who learn something from us, they are devoted to the work at hand as per the rules which are laid

down. They do not do anything which offends us and which is against the Sunnat. We say to them: Do you think we cannot understand the spiritual conditions which you acquire? Unfortunately, the situation today is that instead of spiritual conditions, they want to present customs to us. This is what annoys us.

Speaking out against customs is the most essential thing in these times. As long as customs are not wiped out, the reality cannot be realized. This is why the genuine Sufis of every era spoke out against customs.

Hadrat 'Alā' ad-Dīn Sanjarī *rahimahullāh* compiled the statements of Hadrat Sultān Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. The following is stated therein:

> He then spoke about the Haydarīyyah sect. He said: There was a Turkish child and a dervish. When Genghis Khan attacked and took control of India, he came to his friends and said: "Friends! What are you doing!? Flee from here. These people will vanquish us because they have brought a dervish with them. I fought him and he defeated me. I gauged from this that these people will certainly vanquish us. You should therefore flee." The dervish then disappeared in a cave, never to be seen again. However, what followed was as predicted.
>
> I asked: "Why do the followers of this Haydarīyyah sect wear necklaces and bangles of steel? Do they do this in emulation of them?"

> Hadrat replied: Yes! Previously they were of such a level that they used to heat the steel, hold it with their hands and make it into necklaces and bangles. They would then hang them around their necks and wear them on their hands. What I mean is that steel was like wax in their hands [they could mould it as they liked]. The present generation merely place these necklaces and bangles of steel around their necks and hands. How can they do as their predecessors did?

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* says:

Just as these personalities consider people who are in a state of ecstasy to be excused, they castigate those who merely suffice with customs. Look at how they follow the Sharīʿat in both matters. In other words, the one in a state of ecstasy is considered to be excused while the one who emulates him while being devoid of that condition [of ecstasy] is reprimanded.

He then related a story about the death of the Auliyā'. He said: I had a friend in Budāyūn by the name of Ahmad. He was a pious and righteous man. Although he was uneducated, he would inquire about the rulings of the Sharīʿat every day, and apply them in his life. He would continue learning from whomever he could.

Look at how he praised the one who inquires about the rulings of the Sharīʿat and practises on them! The respect for the Sharīʿat and showing importance to it can be gauged from this.

As-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī Chishtīyyah al-ʿAlīyyah is a book written by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

ra<u>h</u>imahullāh on the lives of the Auliyā'. In it he proves that they adhered strictly to the Sunnat and paid particular attention to the Sharī'at. They reached a level of perfection from which we can conclude that they [the Auliyā'] are really the heirs of the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. Just as the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* combined words with practical application, the Sufis were blessed with a share of it. Thus, they are the true heirs of the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. A <u>H</u>adīth states:

العلماء ورثة الأنبياء.

The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets.

The word 'ulamā' will therefore refer to those who combine words with actions.

The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets

Shaykh Mu<u>h</u>īyy ad-Dīn ibn 'Arabī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* states just as 'Allāmah Sha'rānī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

إعلم أن ورثة الأنبياء هم العلماء والأولياء حفاظ الأحوال والأحكام الباطنة التي تدق على الأفهام. والعلماء حفاظ الأحكام الظاهرة التي تفهم بباد الرأي.

The 'ulamā' and the auliyā' are the heirs of the Prophets 'alayhis salām. The auliyā' preserve internal conditions and injunctions which are not clearly understood. The 'ulamā' preserve external injunctions which are easily understood.

Shaykh Akbar *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says further on: If you ask me about the <u>H</u>adīth which states that the 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets *'alayhimus*

salām, and if it refers to the auliyā' or the jurists, then the answer is that it refers to those 'ulamā' who practise on their knowledge. This is because they combine their words with actions just as the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* combined knowledge with actions. In the same way, those who will be their heirs will have to combine both. Their heirs cannot be those who only have words but are totally devoid of actions.

Many 'ulamā' study the books of Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn 'Arabī *rahimahullāh* but they do not pay attention to the fact that they are devoid of actions and practice, and that they should therefore develop these. Our pious predecessors combined both. In reality, the Sufis are those 'ulamā' who practised on their knowledge and followed the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Character does not refer to superficial character but genuine character. The Sufis explicitly reject superficial character.

The detestability of turning away from the qiblah

On one occasion I entered the masjid and there was no place in the first row. There was an empty spot in the second row so I sat down there. There were two persons in front of me. They turned around and began looking at me. This irked me because they were turning away from the qiblah and looking at me. If I were to reprimand them for this, people will not support me. Instead, they will support them.

The masjid is a place to occupy one's self with Allāh *ta'ālā* and to turn one's attention to Him. Why, then, did they turn and look at me? The fact of the matter is that they do not possess that practical application. If not, it would not have permitted them to turn their

attention towards me. When a person focuses his attention on Allāh *taʿālā*, it is not possible for him to turn to anyone or anything else; especially if he has gone to the masjid to perform salāh.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* encourages us towards tauhīd. When we are in a masjid, we must accord our respect to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. Unfortunately, even the elite do not pay attention to such matters. (compiler)

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* made a significant statement when he said that the inheritance of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* entails words and actions. And a true heir is the one who combines both. However, the subsequent generations found words to be easy so they adopted them. They found sound characteristics to be difficult, so they discarded them. Consequently, they remained deficient. These defective people who are themselves devoid of sound character also make objections against those who have it.

There was a scholar who was sitting in an assembly of his close associates and making objections against Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. He was saying many things against him. Just then, one of Hadrat Thānwī's attendants entered. He heard whatever the scholar said. Later on when the scholar saw him, he asked: "How is Hadrat Maulānā? Is he well?"

The attendant returned to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and related whatever the scholar had said. When Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* heard this, he said: "He knows fully well the reality of what he said." What Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* meant was that the scholar knows the answers to the objections which he is levelling against me. It is not that he does

not know. He fully understands the reality but is wittingly making objections against me.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* possessed a special unique characteristic which the auliyā’ possess. (compiler)

Qādī Thanā’ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* says that the supernatural feats (karāmāt) of the auliyā’ are the fruits of their practising on the Qur’ān and Sunnat. A karāmat is a branch of miracle - muʿjizah. Muʿjizāt are given to Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* while karāmāt are given to auliyā’.

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* says:

فإن الأنبياء يحتجون بالمعجزات على المشركين والأولياء يحتجون بالكرامات على نفوسهم لتصلح ولنفوسهم لتطمئن.

The Prophets establish their proof against polytheists through miracles. The auliyā’ establish a proof over their selves through supernatural feats so that they acquire rectitude, and for the selves of others to acquire tranquillity.

In other words, just as miracles are evidences against the polytheists, karāmāt are proofs over the selves of the saints themselves. We learn from this that karāmāt are not to influence others into becoming their followers. Rather, they are for the rectification of their own selves. The words “over their selves” mean that their own selves are rectified. And the words “for the selves of others” refer to convincing the selves of those who reject.

A karāmat is only acceptable when it is coupled with following the Sunnat. If supernatural feats are displayed independently of the Sunnat, they are not

considered. The Sharīʿat is a supreme thing whose rules have to be obeyed. This is from among the essentials of wilāyat – friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*.

It is related in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* that Abū Yazīd Busṯāmī *raẖimahullāh* said to his friend: "Come let's go and visit that man regarding whose wilāyat and asceticism we heard so much." The two proceeded to the man's place. They observed him emerging from his house and entering the masjid. They then saw him spitting in the direction of the qiblah. On seeing this disrespectful behaviour of his, Abū Yazīd Busṯāmī *raẖimahullāh* turned back and returned without even offering salām to the man. Abū Yazīd *raẖimahullāh* said: "If he cannot uphold one etiquette of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* by not observing the sanctity of the masjid, how can he be worthy enough to know the mysteries of the truth?"

It is essential to uphold the etiquette of the Sharīʿat

What this means is that if he could not observe the external etiquette of the Sharīʿat, how can we believe that he is a saint who bears the mysteries of the truth? He could only be a bearer of the truth if he observed the etiquette of the Sharīʿat. The mysteries of the truth are conferred only to the one who adheres strictly to the Sharīʿat. If a walī does not adhere to them, who will? Knowing the mysteries of Dīn is dependent on observing the etiquette of the Sharīʿat. Nowadays, a person who is totally devoid of the Sharīʿat and walks around naked is considered to be a saint. As for those who adhere to the Sharīʿat, carry out the obligatory actions and uphold the etiquette of the Sharīʿat are not considered to be even worthy of being auliyā'. Yet they firmly believe in the

wilāyat of a person who is totally devoid of the Sharīʿat!

A large section of the Muslim community is immersed in this misguided belief. The Sharīʿat is not of much importance in their sight. Whereas the true saints observed every minor etiquette. These are noted in the books.

On one occasion a saint entered a masjid. Instead of entering with the right foot, he entered with his left foot. He immediately became terrified and fell unconscious. He was thinking to himself: "How could I have done something against the Sunnat?"

It is desirable to enter the masjid with the right foot and it is an etiquette of the masjid. Look at how he was pained by leaving out this act that he fell unconscious. From this we can gauge how much more particular he must have been about carrying out the obligatory actions and injunctions of the Sharīʿat.

The importance of following the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat

There was a person who was studying with us. He used to take pieces of paper, cut them into the size of coins, and they used to turn into real coins. He would then give the coins to his fellow students who would use them to purchase whatever they wanted. However, this person himself would never use them for himself. One day he said to me: "Take me to Hadrat Maulānā so that I could become his murīd. I have a shaykh who is a man of spiritual excellence but Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī combines the external and internal sciences."

I took him to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī who was in Muzaffar Nagar at the time. When I presented the person's request to Hadrat Maulānā, he looked at him carefully from head to toe and then accepted his bayʿat. Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was present at the time. He said: "Hadrat, you don't normally accept bayʿat in the first meeting!?" Hadrat replied: "We do not interact with everyone in the same manner."

The person then said to me: "Maulānā [Thānwī] considers these things [e.g. turning paper into coins] to be impermissible. I am not going to do this anymore." In the first place, he never used those coins for himself; he used to give them to others. However, after pledging bayʿat, he gave up doing this as well. His karāmat which was superior to the making of coins was that he gave this up because of the Sharīʿat and because Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* considered it to be impermissible.

External actions are rectified first

In the Tarīqat, external actions are rectified first and then internal actions. Our Tarīqat is not the one of those who do not follow the Sharīʿat. Instead, we will look at what the Sharīʿat says and give preference to it. Those who come to us do not think about this and demand of us to show them meditation and observation [of unseen things], etc. and feel that if we do not show these things to them, the entire training will take too long. We say to them, we cannot follow the ways which you want. We will follow the way which was taught to us, and the programme which is laid down. We will teach *Qā'idah Baghdādī* (a primer for learning to identify the letters of the Arabic language) first and then we will teach you the Qur'ān. Only then can we progress.

As for meditation and observation which you are demanding of us, what is that? Real meditation is when you think constantly of Allāh *taʿālā*. When a person follows the prescribed way, he will be able to acquire and achieve something. The fact of the matter is that whatever is achieved is done solely through Allāh *taʿālā*; not by the shaykh. It is Allāh *taʿālā* alone who enables a person to experience spiritual ecstasy. We will therefore teach you our system; we cannot follow your way. In fact, we will make you to follow our system because there has to be obedience at every step of the way. The Ahlullāh have done such a great favour to us that they compiled the statements and spiritual conditions of the saints of every era and presented them to us. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them.

I said the same thing in Mumbai. The life conditions of the saints are with us, we can present them to you and show exactly what was said by which saint. We can relate to you the life stories of each of them and what their spiritual rank was. However, time is required for it. You will have to follow the saints because they followed the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat.[1]

Anger is sometimes needed for the sake of rectification

A person sought permission to come to Hadrat Maulānā. He must have written a letter containing

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[1] All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, through the blessing of remaining in the company of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* we have been inspired to collate and compile the statements and teachings of the past scholars and Sufis in a book titled *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* which is in several volumes. The scholars and Sufis have expressed their approval of it. (compiler)

some points related to rectification. Hadrat Maulānā wrote to him to come. The man wrote back: "Very well, I will come but I have two preconditions. One is that I will not eat your food. The other is that you must not get angry at me."

Maulānā replied: "Both conditions are accepted. You may come." When the man arrived, Maulānā said to him: "Look, if there is a need to become angry, I will become angry. If you do not accept, I will give you the amount which you spent to travel here and you may leave." The man agreed and said: "Since you went back on one condition, I will go back on one condition and eat your food." Subsequently, he never did anything which earned Hadrat's anger nor did Hadrat become angry at him. He returned home happily.

Hadrat Thānwī combined words with actions

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī was a man of great spiritual conditions. However, he always placed following the Sunnat first. He was an imām in jurisprudence. The fatāwā which were issued used to be signed by him. Together with this, he was an imām in spiritual conditions. He was an expert in external jurisprudence and internal jurisprudence. He combined the Sharī'at and the Tarīqat. He combined words with actions. You all know that he was a great lecturer. At the same time, he was on the highest level of spirituality. I don't know the countless number of people whom he raised to high levels of spirituality just by his lectures. Those who have been to him and attended his lectures can attest to this.

Note: Just look at the exceptional confidence which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had in his shaykh, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*! This

is why he received khilāfat from his shaykh and was blessed with spiritual wealth. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

THE ULAMĀ’ ARE THE HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS (2)

Yesterday I explained to you that our pious predecessors combined words with actions. An incident in this regard is related about Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*. The imām in the ʿishā salāh read Sūrah az-Zilzāl. Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* was present in the congregation. When all the people left after the salāh, Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* stood up, held his beard and said: “O Allāh! You said:

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهُ.

Whoever does an atom’s weight of good shall see it. Whoever does an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.[1]

“O that Being who recompenses for an atom’s weight of good and for an atom’s weight of evil, protect your servant, Nuʿmān, from the Hell-fire.” Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* continued saying this until the next morning.

These verses are constantly read in our salāhs but they have no effect on our hearts. Look at the condition of Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh*! See how these verses affected him that he remained standing from ʿishā time and continued crying until the time of fajr. This shows that he was not an Imām of words only; but of spiritual conditions as well. This incident is a proof against all the ʿulamā’.

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[1] Sūrah az-Zilzāl, 99: 7-8.

Proof for supernatural feats

The scholars and Sufis concur that when a person engages in extraordinary acts of worship and spiritual striving, Allāh *taʿālā* certainly confers him with extraordinary and supernatural feats. When he engages in extraordinary worship, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with extraordinary favours and bounties.

The books which deal with Islamic beliefs contain discussions on miracles and supernatural feats. We learn from this that this is also an issue related to beliefs. This book explains beliefs and discusses each of the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. It states that supernatural feats have been performed by the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah alone. As for the Muʿtazilah, although they had scholars, because they rejected the supernatural feats of the Sufis, they were not manifested by them. They were included among the deviated sects and innovators because of their rejection of beliefs of this nature.

Supernatural feats are true proofs in favour of the genuineness of the Sufi path and the sincerity of their actions. So many supernatural feats have been performed by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the Tābiʿīn and the righteous after them that they cannot be rejected. Someone asked Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh*: “Why have so many supernatural feats not been performed by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* as they have by the Sufis who came later on?” One reply could be the same as explained above. That is, it has reached such a large number that it cannot be denied (this is known as *tawātur*). Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* said that the īmān of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* was extremely strong as opposed to those who came after them. When there is

weakness in īmān in a people, their auliyā’ are made to perform more supernatural feats.

The strong īmān of the Sahābah

The īmān of all the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ‘anhum* was strong even though there were different levels among them. A supernatural feat is needed when the īmān of a people is weak. In order to strengthen it, the auliyā’ of that time are made to display many supernatural feats. Since the īmān of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ‘anhum* was strong, there was no need for supernatural feats to be displayed. The following statement of Hadrat Abul Hasan Shādhilī *rahimahullāh* is quoted in this regard:

> Hadrat Maryam *‘alayhas salām* used to receive out-of-season fruits as sustenance. This was a supernatural feat to strengthen her īmān and conviction. Once her īmān and conviction became strong, she was made to revert to the normal means of sustenance. This is because once īmān is strengthened, preoccupation with the means does not make one unmindful of the True Provider.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation. (compiler)

The two categories of tawakkul

It is from here that it is said that having tawakkul (reliance on Allāh) while possessing the means is superior to tawakkul in the absence of the means. This is because when a person does not have the means, it is easy for him to focus on the True Provider. On the other hand, it is difficult to focus on

Him while having the means. This is real tawakkul, viz. to focus on Allāh *taʿālā* while having the means.

The scholars say that tawakkul does not mean you must discard the means. Rather, you must turn your focus away from the means.

Someone said to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Sāhib Maungerī *rahimahullāh*: "Supernatural feats are intended to strengthen the īmān of those who have weak īmān. The īmān of the people of today is much weaker than those of the past. This is why we ought to see more supernatural feats in our time. But we find that this is not the case." Maulānā Maungerī *rahimahullāh* replied: "This is an era of misguidance. Previous eras wherein supernatural feats were displayed were eras of guidance."

Maulānā Murtadā Hasan Sāhib Chāndpūrī *rahimahullāh* and I were sitting in the presence of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said: "If supernatural feats were displayed today and people did not believe them and rejected them; then Allāh's punishment will descend. If a general punishment does not descend, it will certainly descend specifically on those who reject." Maulānā Murtadā Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was overjoyed when he heard this.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* writes:

من عاشر الصالحين بالصدق رأى كراماتهم عيانا

The person who lives sincerely with the righteous people will observe their supernatural feats with his own eyes.

We learn from this that supernatural feats are still displayed but there has to be genuine sincerity to

observe them. Qādī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Irshād at-Tālibīn* that if someone says that a karāmat is not a prerequisite for wilāyat, how are we going to ascertain that a particular person is a walī? Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* gave two answers to this. The first is: What is the need to come to know of the wilāyat of a walī? Wilāyat is a special bond with Allāh *taʿālā* irrespective of whether anyone comes to know of it or not. Most of the auliyā' did not know of their own wilāyat, what can be said of others? They will only see the fruits of it after the walī dies.

Miracles are essentially needed by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who invite the creation. It is necessary for them to display their prophet-hood to the people and provide proof for it. As for the invitation by the auliyā', they are inviting towards the Sharīʿat of their Prophet. The miracles of that Prophet are enough for this invitation [of the auliyā']. The scholars and jurists invite towards the external Sharīʿat. The auliyā' first call their disciples towards applying the external Sharīʿat in their lives. After that, they teach them about dhikr, meditation and so on.

From this we learn that the programme of Sufis is to first teach the external Sharīʿat and then occupy the disciple towards the internal self. Those who come to us nowadays want us to teach them meditation from the very beginning. This demand of theirs stems from ignorance about the Tarīqat. I produce books to them and show them so that the Tarīqat may become clear to them.

Spend your time in Allāh's remembrance so that His remembrance may overwhelm the heart and thoughts about anyone else may not remain in it.

The second answer of Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is that with each change in condition which a disciple witnesses within himself, he observes the karāmat of his shaykh in him.

Listen further! The difference between magic and karāmat is that the former is performed at the hands of sinners, atheists and unbelievers who do not follow the Sharīʿat. On the other hand, a karāmat is manifested by a person who is extremely particular about following the Sharīʿat. This is the difference between the two. I say, what are you going to do with a karāmat? Why don't you adopt the fundamental thing and why do you not turn your attention to it? Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Kalīd Mathnawī*:

Now that you have learnt that a qualified shaykh has reached Allāh *taʿālā*, you must try to acquire Allāh *taʿālā* through him. He then identifies the qualified Sufi masters of his time from whom this treasure [of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*] can be acquired. He says, hold on to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn Tabrezī *rahimahullāh*. If you cannot acquire the general blessings from him, go to Maulānā Diyā' al-Haqq Husām ad-Dīn who is his deputy. The latter first derived blessings from Shams Tabrezī *rahimahullāh* and then from Maulānā [Rumī *rahimahullāh*]. He is Maulānā's co-khalīfah and khalīfah as well. At this point, Maulānā – out of his humility – states that he benefited from Hadrat Shams Tabrezī *rahimahullāh*. He writes further on:

If jealousy has taken hold of you in this path, understand well that it is a satanic act. It was Iblīs's jealousy towards Ādām *ʿalayhis salām* which caused him to refuse to prostrate before him. He hated Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* solely out of jealousy. In so doing, he waged war against his own success. There is no pass

on this path which is as difficult as jealousy. Excellent indeed is the person who has no jealousy.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in his explanation of the above:

There is no obstacle in this path which is worse than jealousy. It is because of this that the novice was deprived of acquiring expertise. The novice considered it below him to follow the expert, especially the khalīfah of his shaykh. It is against the temperament of the majority of people to revert to their co-murīd/co-khalīfah. A person thinks to himself: "We are both murīds of the same shaykh. We are therefore equal. How, then, can I revert to him." Expertise cannot be acquired without following an expert.

This is what I intended speaking about, viz. this is the type of deficiency which is found in people. It is such a serious obstacle that it refuses to enable a person to lower himself before an expert. Consequently, the defective ones are deprived of acquiring proficiency.

He explains the reason for this. It is because of the dominance of physical qualities such as lust and anger. They create selfishness and egotism, and egotism causes jealousy. You should therefore give up jealousy and follow the experts.

He says further on: Jealousy towards the auliyā' results in misery and destruction. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* has concealed most of the auliyā'. If not, people will oppose them and cause their own destruction.

The dhikr of the auliyā'

Now that we are speaking about the auliyā' and their karāmāt, this entire time of ours is being spent in

dhikr. If you listen to it, your time will not go to waste. When I mentioned this in one place, some people came and said to me: "This point struck a note in my heart and really appealed to me."

Listen! Here I am speaking about the auliyā' and their karāmāt. Many people have reached Allāh *taʿālā* in this way and became people of high spiritual levels. Speaking about the auliyā' does not go to waste. Rather, it has a certain effect and changes many people.

Note: It is solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* that our time is continuously being spent in His remembrance. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer us with their spirituality through His grace and kindness. Āmīn. (compiler)

The books of the auliyā'

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* said that after the auliyā', their books and written works are their deputies. What this means is that the benefit which people were deriving from them while they were alive is derived from reading their teachings and statements. These too have an effect on the people. The saints paid particular attention to studying the *Mathnawī* and remained fully occupied with it. This is because the written word creates a bond between the reader and the one who wrote it. The focus of the writer is directed on the reader. Through this bond between the reader and writer, a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is established. It brings life to the hearts of people.

Just as the hearts of these auliyā' are alive, so is their speech. Thus, wherever their speech reaches, it provides life. Far more than external and physical karāmāt is this karāmat of reviving the hearts. After

all, this is certainly not inferior to bringing the dead back to life. The speech of the one who is living is also alive. If you were to engage in dhikr on your own, you will not benefit as much as you would when you speak about these auliyā'. This is because their dhikr results in affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. If you remain with them, you will be blessed with an affinity similar to theirs.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said with reference to a very senior scholar: "Such and such Maulānā Sāhib speaks a lot. However, inshā Allāh, now he will not speak." Subsequently, we personally heard that Maulānā saying: "I really do want to speak but I feel as though someone is holding my tongue." He was a great orator but after Hadrat [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] said this, he stopped talking completely.

Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] had sealed his speech in order to create a special spiritual condition within him. This is because there is a vast difference between the spoken word and a spiritual condition. The true heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are those who combine words with spiritual conditions. They are the ones who are referred to as auliyā'.

When I came to Allāhābād the first time, the blessing which I received is that I heard someone saying: "There will come a time when words will be like those of the Prophets but actions will be like the Pharaohs." I cannot describe the immense benefit I got from this statement. What a unique statement!

If you understand it, you would have understood something really great. If you do not understand it, then the greatest of statements will be nothing for you.

Note: I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to bless us with understanding and insightfulness so that we can understand and appreciate the words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, practise on them, and become eligible for Allāh's grace. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE ‘ULAMĀ’ ARE THE PROTECTORS OF THE SHARĪ‘AT (1)

This voice recorder makes it easy to transcribe the lecture. This is why it is placed here. Those who are in-charge of it will transcribe the lecture later on. It had stopped working so we took it to someone who knows how to repair such items. After examining it he said: “Several parts have become weak. They will work for some time, but two parts are totally useless. They will have to be replaced although they will work for a few days.” We gave him some money for the repairs. When he completed the job, he said that the money which we gave him was more than what the parts cost. He therefore returned the extra money. Had he kept the extra money for himself, we would not have known anything. Despite this, he returned the money. From this I concluded that he is an honest man.

I was travelling by rickshaw on one occasion when it stopped suddenly. When I asked what the matter was, the rickshaw driver informed me that the tyre had become punctured. I thought to myself that since the tyre has lost its air, the driver will fill it immediately. But he took it to some place where they fill air. He said to the man there: “The tyre is punctured, kindly fill it with air.” The man inflated the tyre and the rickshaw continued on its way.

I concluded the following from this incident: When a tyre of a rickshaw loses air, it cannot move. When it is filled with air, it will move once again. It requires someone to fill the air in the tyre. In the same way, we have lost our air and we are in need of someone to fill it. As long as we do not go to the person who can

fill the air, this defect will remain in us. The air which we need is īmān, and we can only obtain it from those who are filled with īmān. Everyone is in need of such people.

Listen! Directly across this house assemblies are held wherein Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* are denigrated and criticized. The people there claim that these two personalities went against their mentor, Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. They produce books to back their claims. However, look at the honorific manner in which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* addresses Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He writes in one letter:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, the Muhaddith Gangohī…

If Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* himself says that Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is the fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, and a Muhaddith, how can anyone claim that he differed with his mentor!? Furthermore, there is no limit to how much Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to respect Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

I say, your views with regard to such great personalities hold no weight at all. As for the one whose view we can take into consideration, he refers to him as:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, the Muhaddith Gangohī…

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a decisive verdict which silences the opposition! (compiler)

On one occasion, the very same people across the road were saying to the public about me: “Do not go to him; your Dīn will get spoilt.” They said many other things. I thought to myself, after hearing all these things about me, very few people will come to me in the morning. However, when it was the time to conduct my morning assembly, I noticed that there were even more than normal people. I then explained to them that these personalities [Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*] did not go against their mentor. Hadrat Gangohī was an erudite scholar. Every murīd has the right to say to his shaykh if he sees in the latter something which is against the Sharī'at. Even when he does this, it does not mean that the murīd no longer remains his murīd. I also said to them that there is one singular thing which will expel a murīd from his shaykh, and that is when he has evil beliefs about his shaykh. This is a matter of the Sharī'at. Go to the madāris and look at the books of jurisprudence. You will find Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* holding a view on a certain issue while Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* and Imām Muhammad *rahimahullāh* who were his students having a different view on the same issue. Despite this, they are not removed from the body of Hanafīs. Instead, they are collectively known as Hanafīs.

The following rule can be extracted from the above: If a murīd differs with his shaykh on a certain issue, he does not leave the circle of being a murīd as long as his beliefs are in order. This applies even if the shaykh becomes angry with him and expels him. Because he has no evil beliefs about his shaykh, he will not leave his circle. The shaykh too will become pleased with him. If he is not pleased with him in

this world, he will certainly be pleased with him in the Hereafter.

I am explaining this point to show that Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is a murīd of Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and has full confidence in him. Why, then, are you discussing these issues? After all, even Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* and Imām Muhammad *rahimahullāh* differed with Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* on certain issues.

Take *Tirmidhī Sharīf* as another example. Imām Tirmidhī *rahimahullāh* was a student of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*. He was no ordinary student. Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* said to him: "I benefited more from you than what you did from me." Despite this, we find Imām Tirmidhī *rahimahullāh* differing with Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* on certain issues. We learn from this that a student can differ with his teacher, and so can a murīd with his shaykh.

If a shaykh does not know a ruling of the Sharī'at, he will revert to his murīd. I personally observed this in Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. 'Ulamā' such as Maulānā 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib used to be with him. He would say to them: "Look for this ruling in the books." They would find the ruling and present it to Hadrat. He would say to them: "Brother, I am gone old now. This is why I need people like you."

A shaykh also needs to know certain rulings. If his eyesight is gone weak or cannot refer to books himself due to some reason, he will ask others. In fact, it is his duty to ask. We constantly see our seniors reverting to their murīds for certain rulings. Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* also used to ask rulings from his murīds. And look at how he addresses Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Ṯarīqat, the Muẖaddith Gangohī…

There was a saint who listened to samāʿ. He became so entranced that he lost his perception for three days. Despite this, when it was the time of s̲alāh, he would perform wuḏū’ and perform his s̲alāh while paying careful attention to the number of rakʿats. H̲aḏrat Maulānā used to say with reference to him: "He was slightly unconscious from this side, but not unconscious in the least as regards his s̲alāh. He was particular about performing the correct number of rakʿats and performed each s̲alāh at its appointed time."

The condition of people in those times was really amazing. They were so much immersed in Allāh's love that they appeared to be unconscious. At the same time, they were so vigilant about following the Sharīʿat that they did not allow themselves to miss a single s̲alāh. This was really their remarkable achievement in being able to combine love for the Sharīʿat, and recognition of the injunctions of the Sharīʿat.

I had quoted a couplet on this subject. Subsequently, a person came to me and said: "You quoted a couplet. I remember the first half of it but not the second. Tell me what it is." [It translates as follows]:

> To have the goblet of the Sharīʿat in one hand and the anvil of love in the other, and to play with both is not the work of every curious person.

The man said to me: "I remember the words 'To have the goblet of the Sharīʿat in one hand and the anvil of

love in the other,’ but not the second part. I then quoted it to him.

An anvil is made of iron. It is so tough that other strong metals are placed on it and straightened. On the other hand, a goblet is extremely delicate because it is made of glass. If it slips and falls, it breaks into smithereens. The Sharīʿat is compared to a goblet while love is compared to an anvil. To play with these two is certainly no easy task and cannot be done by anyone and everyone.

Note: Māshā Allāh, our ʿulamā’ of Deoband possess this comprehensiveness on the level of perfection. May Allāh *taʿālā* increase it. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that saintliness is tough like steel while the Sharīʿat is extremely delicate. What this means is that if a saint is overtaken by his emotions and says “I am the truth,” “Glory to me! Look at how great I am!” or statements of this nature, his saintliness will remain intact. On the other hand, when it comes to matters of the Sharīʿat, a person has to worry about what is lawful and what is not at every step of the way. If he merely steps out of the limits of the Sharīʿat, the ʿulamā’ will issue fatāwā against him. It is their responsibility to issue verdicts against a person who transgresses the Sharīʿat even in the least. This is because the ʿulamā’ are the protectors of the Sharīʿat. If they do not carry out this responsibility, they will be questioned about it.

Note: It is the responsibility of the masses to pay heed to the ʿulamā’. If not they will lose in this world and in the Hereafter. We are observing this nowadays. To Allāh alone is our complaint. (compiler)

In our times, there was no one greater than Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] as regards the sciences of the Sharīʿat. All the fatāwā which used to come were not considered to be reliable without his signature. He had all the rulings in his memory. It is ʿulamā' like this who are the protectors of the Sharīʿat.

This point was mentioned by the way. I was speaking about that saint who had listened to samāʿ and lost consciousness for three days. Everyone also concluded that he lost consciousness. When he came to his senses after three days, he asked his murīds: "Did I perform my salāhs?" They informed him that he did. He did not suffice with this answer. He wrote to one of his khulafā' and asked: "I performed my salāhs in this condition. Are they valid?"

He wrote back: "The fact of the matter is that the salāhs which Hadrat performed in that condition are valid because Hadrat's heart was completely cut off from this world. The presence of heart and proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* which Hadrat must have experienced at that time is beyond doubt. Hadrat's salāhs are therefore valid. However, out of consideration to the Sharīʿat, I think they should be repeated."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply! The Sufis were really impressed by his reply because the respect of his shaykh was given full consideration and the order of the Sharīʿat was also explained. He asked him to repeat his salāhs because his condition was similar to a condition of unconsciousness. Salāhs which are performed while in a state of unconsciousness are not fulfilled. They have to be repeated.

The Sharīʿat rules over everyone

We learn from this that an order of the Sharīʿat can be taught to one's shaykh. This is because the Sharīʿat rules over everyone. The murīd needs it and so does the shaykh. Thus, if Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* or Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said something [to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*], they explained a ruling of the Sharīʿat. Their objective was to preserve the Sharīʿat and not to differ with Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

It is stated in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* that when Hadrat Mansūr *rahimahullāh* was to be arrested, he was in a room. It was through his karāmat that the room became so narrow and constricted that his arrestors wanted to pull him out of the room but they couldn't. Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* happened to come there and said to him: "You will have to accept the divine decree which has been written for you and come out." He came out of his room and was then put to the gallows.

I was reading to you a letter of Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* from the *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*. Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* must have written something about certain Sufis to which Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote:

> The shaykh is a pious and reliable scholar and dervish. There is no doubt about his statement. However, when a seeker experiences a spiritual condition through the manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā*, he considers himself to be the promised Mahdī. This is why many saints made claims to being the Mahdī. The reality is

> that they erred in this regard. In such a situation, he is rescued from this error through the focus of his shaykh and progresses to the next station. If a seeker is a qualified scholar, he must measure his conditions against the Sharīʿat and continue on his path. It is possible that one of these saints experienced this condition and therefore assumed that he was the promised Mahdī. And his followers, because of their sincerity and devotion, believe him to be such. No matter what, there is certainly truthfulness in him even though he committed an error due to human constraints. When man reaches a certain level, it is inevitable for him to err. Nonetheless, I will ask that saint to make duʿā’ for you and your associates. I am quite weak at present and also ill, I will therefore not be able to go to ʿArafāt for the hajj this year. However, I will – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – not be deprived of spiritual presence. I thanked Allāh *taʿālā* profusely after hearing about your internal spiritual conditions. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate your rank, take you closer to Him and make it a means for the salvation of unworthy people like us.[1]

Look! Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that if a person is a qualified ʿālim, he must measure his conditions against the Sharīʿat. We learn from this that it is essential to weigh ourselves against the

[1] *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*, vol. 1, p. 8.

Sharīʿat in every condition. Every word, action and condition will have to be presented to the Sharīʿat. If it is in line with the Sharīʿat, it will be accepted. If not, it will be rejected.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent clarification by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This demonstrates his affinity with the Tarīqat. (compiler)

I wrote an article on the theme of progressing from the path of humaneness. The people were quite impressed by it. Maulānā Muhammad Miyā Fārūqī Allāhābādī Sāhib was also speaking about it yesterday. Let me relate an incident which is connected to this subject.

It is written in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* that a person used to get angry and wanted to have this ailment treated. To do this, he employed an uncouth man who was always prone to anger. He used to pay him so that he may display his rudeness and anger. In turn, he will become angry at him, suppress his emotions, and warn his carnal self saying: "Others must be offended by your anger just as you are offended by his anger. Others must also be inconvenienced and pained by you." The man rectified his anger in this way.

Look at how he rectified his anger and reached Allāh *taʿālā* in this way. He made his own anger a means to reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. This was no ordinary feat. This too is included in the progress of humaneness because anger is intrinsic to humans. If a person maintains it within the limits of the Sharīʿat and rectifies it, it is also a high form of worship. Eating and drinking are, nonetheless, from among the intrinsic requirements of mankind. I spoke something about this as well. I related the following Hadīth in this regard:

وأخرج أبو داؤد في السنن بإسناد حسن عن سعد بن معاذ عن ابن أنس عن أبيه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من أكل طعاما ثم قال اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ، غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person completes eating and says:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā for having fed me this food and provided it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Then his past sins are forgiven.

The person who wears a garment and makes this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ كَسَانِيْ هٰذَا الِّلبَاسَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā for having clothed me this garment and provided it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Then his past sins are forgiven.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī *rahimahullāh* relates that Hadrat Hasan said: I noticed Anas ibn Mālik *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* eating various types of food in large amounts, and then vomiting it. He used to benefit from it and say:

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[1] سنن أبي داؤد: ص ٥٥٨.

واتخاذ الأطعمة سرف إلا إذا قصد قوة الطاعة أو دعوة الأضياف قوما بعد قوم.

It is extravagance to prepare several types of dishes unless they are consumed to gain strength for Allāh's obedience or for the feeding of guests one after the other.

A person should therefore make the intention of gaining strength for worship when he eats. He will be classified as an obedient servant. He says further on:

ولا يقصد به التلذذ والتنعم، فإن الله تعالى ذم الكافرين بأكلهم للتمتع والتنعم.

A servant should not eat with the intention of enjoyment and gratification because Allāh taʿālā castigates the unbelievers for eating in this way.

We learn from this that eating must be for the sake of obtaining strength to worship Allāh *taʿālā*. It must not be for enjoyment and self-gratification. Allāh *taʿālā* castigates the unbelievers for eating with this intention. I recall H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* quoting this couplet:

> The one who was brought up in the lap of luxury cannot reach the Beloved. Only a person who bore hardships and difficulties can remain firm on the path of love.

The Qur'ān repeatedly speaks out against revelling in luxuries and comforts. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ

Leave them to eat and enjoy themselves, and to be preoccupied by hope. Soon they shall come to know.[1]

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ.

Eat and enjoy [yourselves] for a short while. You are certainly sinners.[2]

قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ

Say: Enjoy yourselves. You will then have to return to the fire.[3]

وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَاْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَاْكُلُ الْاَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ.

As for those who are unbelievers, they are enjoying themselves and eating as animals eat. And the fire is their abode.[4]

Look how severely Allāh *taʿālā* reprimands the unbelievers for revelling in luxuries and comforts. This is because enjoyment was the objective of their life. If a believer too does not have the intention of gaining strength for worship from his eating and drinking, he will also be reprimanded. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says:

> Food is provided so that man may live and engage in Allāh's remembrance. While you have this belief that this life is solely for eating and drinking.

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[1] Sūrah al-<u>H</u>ijr, 15: 3.

[2] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 46.

[3] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 30.

[4] Sūrah Mu<u>h</u>ammad, 47: 12.

This is a very powerful theme. Try to understand it if you can. When an unbeliever eats, he does it to obtain enjoyment. His eating is therefore included in his unbelief. Because unbelief is his aim, he is giving strength to his unbelief through his pleasures and enjoyments. On the other hand, īmān is the aim for all the actions of a Muslim. By eating and drinking to obtain strength for worship, he is actually increasing his īmān. There is obviously a glaring difference between the two.

Let me tell you one more thing in order to make you understand. If you eat with the intention of worship, then whatever enjoyment you experience in the food will not come to an end. Whether you intend it or not, it will be acquired by you. Why, then, do you not make it your objective? Enjoyment and pleasure should not be your objective. This is an excellent theme to create cognition. If you ponder over it, you will certainly acquire Allāh-recognition.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* advises us to ponder over this subject. (compiler)

It is stated in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* that if accumulating wealth is for the sake of contentment of the heart, then it is not necessary for tawakkul (reliance on Allāh *ta'ālā*) to remain. He then quotes an incident of Hadrat Bishr *rahimahullāh*. One of his companions, Husayn Maghāzilī, relates: "I was sitting with him one afternoon. A middle-aged man entered. He had a wheat complexion and hollow cheeks. Hadrat Bishr stood up to receive the man. I never saw him standing up for anyone before this. He then gave me a handful of dirhams and said to me: 'Go and buy the best food which you can with this money.' This

too was the first time I saw him asking anyone to buy food.”

“I brought the food and Bishr sat with the man and partook of the meal. I never saw Bishr sitting with anyone before this. When everyone finished eating, there was still a considerable amount of food left over. The man gathered all the food, packed it, wrapped it in a cloth, carried it and departed.”

“I was astonished at this and was not happy by his action. Hadrat Bishr said to me: ‘You probably dislike this action of his.’ I said: ‘He took the left over food without permission and left!? This is obviously an offensive action.’”

“Hadrat Bishr said: ‘That was my brother Fath Mosulī who came today from Mosul to visit me. (Mosul was very far from where they were. The man arrived in a supernatural way). He came to teach us that when there is true reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, there is no harm in storing anything.’”

Glory to Allāh! Look at how subtle and intricate their teachings are! Deep understanding and insight are needed to understand them correctly. Hadrat Fath Mosulī took the left over food with him to teach Hadrat Bishr this ruling of the Tarīqat that after acquiring firmness in reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, there is no harm in storing things and it does not negate tawakkul. This is because when such people’s gaze turns away from the means and focuses on the Creator of the means, then even when they adopt the means, their focus does not shift away in the least from Allāh *taʿālā*.

The saints say that the highest level of tawakkul is to have total reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* despite adopting the means. This was the nature of the tawakkul of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He used to adopt the means while having his focus and gaze completely on Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained most enlightening and beneficial themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them and put them into practice. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE ‘ULAMĀ’ ARE THE PROTECTORS OF THE SHARĪ‘AT (2)

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* says: The Hadīth states:

العلماء ورثة الأنبياء.

The ʿulamā’ are the heirs of the Prophets.

Who does it refer to; the auliyā’ or the jurists? The answer is that it refers to practising ʿulamā’,

لجمعهم في الإرث بين القال والحال.

Because they combine words with actions.

Now when we talk about practical application, the masses get angry at us and want to know why we speak about this. Whereas I am actually quoting the words of Shaykh Akbar Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī to you. The real heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are these very ʿulamā’ who combine words with actions. Their inheritance is not restricted to words but extends to actions and conditions as well. This is how the ʿulamā’ of the past were. That is, they combined words with actions. They also emulated Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his character and mannerisms. Later on, the majority of people lagged behind in actions and conditions. They had knowledge but not actions. Such ʿulamā’ are not worthy of being referred to as heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām.*

We learn from the above that if there are only words without actions, then this is misguidance. The ʿulamā’ and Sufis noticed that this special quality of

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was disappearing from the people. If nothing was done to preserve it, the very essence of Dīn will cease to exist and misguidance will become common. They went into deep discussions on this issue. Today words are considered to be everything, while people know nothing about actions and conditions.

I was going from my hometown to Thānah Bhawan, and intended proceeding for h̲ajj from there. I met a student along the way. Whenever we stopped at a station and I needed water, he would run and bring it for me. He did his utmost to help and serve me in whatever way he could. I asked him: "Where are you going to?" He replied: "I am going to Madrasah Maz̲āhir al-ʿUlūm, Sahāranpūr." When we reached the Sahāranpūr station and he was about to bid me farewell, he said: "I am fully aware of the condition of your journey. When you go there [Makkah], you must make duʿā' that I become an expert orator."

I thought to myself, he is asking me to make duʿā' that he becomes an orator, but not for the acquisition of knowledge and practice. Nonetheless, I made duʿā' for him.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Anwar Shāh S̲āh̲ib Kashmīrī *rah̲imahullāh* used to speak about an illustrious Muh̲addith. When he reached there [Makkah], he made duʿā' that he must be able to follow the Sunnat. There were others with him. They made duʿā' that they become h̲āfiz̲, but he only made duʿā' to be able to follow the Sunnat. Anyway, that student requested me to make duʿā' for him. I remembered him when I reached Makkah and made this duʿā' for him. I was still astonished that at a place where duʿā's are accepted, he did not ask me to make duʿā' that he dies on īmān. He ought to have

asked me to make duʿā’ for the acquisition of knowledge and steadfastness on the Sharīʿat.

When I returned from h̲ajj, I learnt that the student passed away not long after that and could not even reach the time when he could deliver lectures. Had he remained alive, he probably would have learnt to deliver lectures. Nonetheless, I ask, even if someone did become an expert orator, of what benefit would that be? A mere lecture which is devoid of action has no benefit apart from making the masses your followers. You will derive no benefit from this in the Hereafter. Understand this well.

If you are irked by what I said, you may continue being so. The fact remains that for you to be an heir of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, words alone are not enough. It is essential for you to couple your words with action as was the case with our pious predecessors. That is, they combined words with actions.

Shaykh Yāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh* was an erudite scholar. He was asked: “Is a karāmat similar to magic? What is the distinguishing point between the two?” He replied: “The difference between the two is that magic can be performed by flagrant sinners, atheists and unbelievers. A karāmat can only be performed by a person who is steeped in his adherence to the Sharīʿat.

أما الكرامات فلا يظهر إلا على يد من بالغ في اتباع الشريعة حتى يبلغ الغاية. فهذا هو الفارق بينهما.

Look! This is what your scholars and Sufis are saying. A person who is at the peak in his strict adherence to the Sharīʿat is the only one who can

perform a karāmat. In other words, it is a prerequisite for a walī to adhere strictly to the Sharīʿat. Despite this, we see that let alone following the Sharīʿat, a person who goes around naked is believed to be a walī. On the other hand, if there is an ʿālim who follows the Sharīʿat and does not transgress its limits is not even thought of being a walī. In fact, people believe that such a person can never be a walī. The scholars have gone into powerful discussions and investigations on the issue of wilāyat and karāmat. This is why we are speaking about this topic to you. If these things are not even mentioned to you, knowledge of them will come to an end.

Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* was an esteemed scholar. He displayed the greatness of the Sharīʿat. He said that the most essential thing after Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the most blessed thing for those who come after him is that it is the responsibility of the ʿulamā' to preserve the Sharīʿat. It is really scholars like these who preserve the Sharīʿat.

I say to you, it is necessary for everyone to practise on the Sharīʿat – the ʿulamā' and the masses. However, preserving the knowledge of the Sharīʿat is the responsibility of the ʿulamā'. Just as *tabarrukāt* (items of blessings of the pious) are preserved, the Sharīʿat ought to be considered to be a *tabarruk* and be preserved and protected. If the ʿulamā' do not preserve it, knowledge of the Sharīʿat will depart and their names will be struck off from the register of ʿulamā'.

A man from Jaunpūr was invited by some people to a certain place. He was extremely happy with them and said: "Go, I have pardoned all of you – the living and the dead." When I heard about this, I said: "How can

you pardon the sins of the living and the dead? You can have only your own sins pardoned. Who are you to pardon the sins which they committed against Allāh *taʿālā*? Their flagrant sinning and immorality can only be pardoned through repentance. You do not have the power to pardon them. Of what benefit, then, is the pardon which you extended to them?" The masses were overjoyed that he pardoned them their sins. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such statements and beliefs.

The sign of an unaccepted seeker

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

> The sign of an unaccepted seeker is that he does not give even one percent importance to the obligatory salāhs as he does to the different forms of dhikr taught by the Sufis.

When the accursed Shaytān takes control of this cursed group and moves it very far away from the straight path, these people consider the obligatory salāh to be like a tax which is given to the ruler. They feel that the time which was spent in performing salāh went to waste. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

He says further on, this is the condition of those who claim to be Muslims. I am not even talking about those who are out of the circle of Islam. It is most astonishing that these claimants to Islam consider the obligatory salāh to be like a tax which is given to the ruler, and the time which is spent in performing it to have gone to waste. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Note: The proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* which is realized through obligatory actions is superior to the one

which is achieved through optional actions. Obligatory actions play a major role in the acquisition of wilāyat. Yes, one has to be particular about optional actions as well so that he gains proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and reaches a special level of wilāyat. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE ‘ULAMĀ’ ARE THE PROTECTORS OF THE SHARĪ‘AT (3)

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ حَصِّنْ فَرْجِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ اَمْرِيْ.

O Allāh! Safeguard my private part [from shameful things] and make easy for me all my matters.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ وَتَمَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَتَمَامَ رِضْوَانِكَ وَتَمَامَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wudū’, perfection in salāh, Your absolute pleasure and Your total forgiveness.

The order to perform salāh is in the Qur’ān, and so is the order to perform wudū’. Just as verses were revealed with reference to salāh, so were they revealed with reference to wudū’. Therefore, the importance which is shown to salāh will have to be shown to wudū’ as well. Wudū’ is a Sunnat of all the Prophets *‘alayhimus salām*. Wudū’ is a purification for salāh. It is through wudū’ that we enter salāh. The level of the wudū’ will dictate the level of a person’s salāh. If the wudū’ is perfect, the salāh will be perfect. If the wudū’ is defective, so will be the salāh. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* first asked for perfection in wudū’:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wudū’.

He then followed it by:

وَتَمَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ

...perfection in salāh.

After asking for perfection in wudū’ and salāh, he said:

وَتَمَامَ رِضْوَانِكَ

Your absolute pleasure...

And:

وَتَمَامَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ

Your total forgiveness.

Look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* is asking for perfection in everything – forgiveness, pleasure, salāh and wudū’. We learn from this that perfection in wudū’ is required just as perfection in salāh is required. We will therefore have to give the same importance to wudū’ as we do to salāh. We will also order the performance of both in the same way.

There are some people who are rejecting wudū’. They claim that there was a need for wudū’ in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* because the Arabs were shepherds. They used to live in dusty and dirty conditions, so they had to perform wudū’. On the other hand, we live in palatial homes, we do not become dusty and dirty; so there is no need to perform wudū’. These people want to express their own views in opposition to the Qur’ān. There are explicit verses of the Qur’ān on the obligation of wudū’. These cannot be abrogated or cancelled by your own opinions. Yes, when a person cannot

perform wudū’ [for certain reasons as explained in the books of jurisprudence], he is required to perform tayammum. The same level of purity is acquired through tayammum as from wudū’. How, then, can you exercise your own logic!?

Total purity is achieved through tayammum

A saint fell ill. It was permissible for him to perform tayammum. He didn’t have to perform wudū’ but he continued doing so. He said to the doctor: “I will agree to your treatment on two conditions: (1) I will not consume bitter and awful-tasting medicines. (2) I will not give up performing wudū’.” The doctor replied: “I will prescribe very light and tasty medicines for you.” After some time, the doctor said to him: “When does the verse which makes reference to the performance of tayammum apply, and in which situations?” The doctor had posed this question in a very respectful manner to the saint. He therefore began performing tayammum.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were overjoyed when the verse on tayammum was revealed. They said to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: “O family of Abū Bakr! Your blessings are immense.” The verse which makes reference to tayammum was revealed when Hadrat ʿĀ’ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* had lost her necklace. Searching for it resulted in the salāh being delayed. The order to perform tayammum was revealed. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* realized the value of tayammum, expressed their happiness and said to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: “O Abū Bakr! Allāh *taʿālā* has made things easy for us because of you and your family.”

It is not right to decrease the value of anything. One should neither have doubts about wudū’ nor

tayammum. Both are the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* and purity is acquired from both.

There was a saint who used to perform wuḏū' but not tayammum. Ḫaḏrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb S̲āḫib *raḫimahullāh* went to him and said: "You consider tayammum to be a defective form of acquiring purity. You do not believe it to be equal to wuḏū'. If you think about it, you will come to this conclusion." What he meant was that tayammum is a complete purity just as wuḏū' is. When you cannot perform wuḏū' then perform tayammum. The saint then began performing tayammum.

We perform wuḏū' and tayammum after believing both to be the orders of Allāh *taʿālā.* When we perform wuḏū', we experience a type of purity in our heart. The same can be said of tayammum.

Look at the extent of importance Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is giving to wuḏū':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wuḏū'.

In the same duʿā' Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is asking for total forgiveness, perfect pleasure, perfect s̲alāh and perfect wuḏū'. This also demonstrates the importance of wuḏū' and s̲alāh. The scholars explained the importance of these acts in their respective eras.

سألني رجل شيخ في المنام فقال أي شيء يتقرب به العبد إلى الله. فقلت لذلك ابتداء وانتهاء. فابتداؤه الورع. وانتهاؤه الرضاء التسليم والتوكل.

A person asked me in a dream: "What is the thing through which a person can get close to Allāh taʿālā?" I replied: "There is a beginning and an end for that. The beginning is asceticism and piety (which is another name for abstention from prohibited and disliked actions). Its end is accepting the decree of Allāh taʿālā and placing one's trust in Him.

I now explain what comes after that.

The importance of obligatory actions

A believer must first occupy himself in the obligatory actions. When he completes them, he may carry out the Sunnat actions and then the supererogatory actions. He adds:

فلما لم يفرغ من الفرائض فالاشتغال بالسنن حمق ورعونة، والنوافل قبل الفرائض لم يقبل منه وأهين.

If he has not completed the obligatory actions and occupies himself in the Sunnat actions, then this is foolishness and stupidity. Supererogatory actions before the obligatory ones will not be accepted. Instead, the person will be disgraced (because supererogatory actions are for the completion and perfection of obligatory actions; they are not the actual actions).

Giving up the unlawful is also obligatory

He writes further:

فمن الفرائض ترك الحرام والشرك بالله عز وجل في خلقه والاعتراض عليه في قدره وقضاءه.

Giving up the unlawful is from among the obligatory actions. The same can be said of ascribing partners

with Allāh taʿālā, and making objections against His decrees.

وإجابة الخلق وطاعته والاعتراض عن أمر الله وطاعته قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الله.[١]

Obeying the creation and turning away from the order of Allāh taʿālā and His obedience also entails disobedience to Allāh taʿālā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Obedience to the creation is not permitted if it entails disobedience to Allāh taʿālā.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* says:

ما كان معجزة لنبي جاز أن يكون كرامة لولي بحكم التبع لا بحكم الاستقلال.

A miracle of a Prophet can be a karāmat for a walī, but this will be subservient to the miracle and not independent of it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an essential condition he attached to it! May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn. (compiler)

He then states:

وبالجملة فمن عاشر الصالحين بالصدق وخالطهم رأى كراماتهم عيانا.

To sum up, the person who lives with the righteous and intermingles with them with sincerity and devotion will see their karāmāt with his own eyes.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٤٣٢.

Note: Although people remain in the company of the righteous, they are deprived of the promised benefits because they are generally not sincere in it. A poet says:

> O Farīd! Have a genuine and sincere intention, and you will acquire the key to cognition.

People reject the karāmāt of the saints of their time

Some people accept the karāmāt of the saints of the past but not of the saints of their time. These people are like the Jews of the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They believed in the miracles of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* because they did not see him, but rejected the miracles of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because they saw him. They rejected him out of jealousy and enmity. There are times when people reject because of jealousy and enmity. Then there are some who believe that there are auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* in this time but they do not believe in any specific person because if they do, they will have to submit before him. This is why people in general do not believe in a specific walī. He says in this regard:

هذا محروم من جميع الإمداد في عصره.

Such a person is deprived of all help in his time.

What this means is that he is already deprived of the blessings of those whom he does not attest to or believe in. He is also deprived of the blessings of those whom he believes in the sense that he is deprived completely of Allāh's help. Just think about what he is saying! Rejecting a certain walī causes one

to be deprived of the blessings of all the auliyā'. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Bāyazīd Bustāmī *rahimahullāh* said: "Even if you see a person flying you must not be deceived by him until you see him firm in carrying out orders, abstaining from prohibitions and remaining within the boundaries of the Sharīʿat."

It is stated in *Futūhāt*: "If a person comes to you in your dream and informs you that you have reached Allāh *taʿālā* so there is no need for you to do any good actions anymore, you must never believe him."

Shaykh states in *Futūhāt* that the person who strives to understand the mysteries of the Sharīʿat and solve the terminologies of the Sharʿī sciences must leave his intelligence and personal opinions aside, and make the Sharīʿat of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* his guide.

Kashf which is against the Sharīʿat has to be cast aside

He states further: If a person experiences a kashf (exposition) which makes lawful something which unlawful in the Sharīʿat of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then he must cast aside his kashf. It is obligatory on him not to act on it and obligatory to revert to the ruling of the Sharīʿat in that regard. All those who experience kashf concur that after the end of prophet-hood with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, no one has the right to proclaim anything as lawful or unlawful. The author goes at length in explaining this theme.

He then says: "O my brothers! You must be vigilant and safeguard yourself against the evils of kashf. I have desired your wellbeing and fulfilled my duty."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful piece of advice! Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

An incident related to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī

Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* relates his personal incident. He says: "A brilliant light appeared before me. It had covered the entire horizon. I then saw an image within that light. It addressed me saying: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have withdrawn all obligations from you. If you want, you may worship me. If you do not want, you do not have to worship me. The choice is yours.'"

"When I heard this, I said: 'Get away from me, you cursed one!' The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and the image turned to smoke and disappeared. The cursed one then addressed me: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from me because you have knowledge of the injunctions of your Sustainer, and you are fully aware of your conditions. I had deluded 70 people of the Tarīqat through a similar incident.'"

Someone asked Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh*: "How did you recognize that this was Shaytān?" He replied: "He was making lawful something which Allāh *taʿālā* had made unlawful through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is not the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something prohibited to His Prophets and then to secretly make it lawful to a specific servant. Allāh *taʿālā* never does this; it is against His norm."

Saintliness cannot be acquired by discarding the Sharīʿat

Did you see!? This was the blessing of following the Sharīʿat. Hadrat Shaykh Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* had

acquired a correct understand of Dīn and was on an upright spiritual condition. This is why Shaytān could not influence him in any way. The Sharīʿat came from Allāh *taʿālā* and was revealed to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you cast it aside and search for saintliness you will never find it. Allāh *taʿālā* can only be reached through the Sharīʿat and salvation in the Hereafter will be gained by following it alone. The Sharīʿat is the most essential thing. If you hold on to the Sharīʿat you will find the Tarīqat as well. After all, the Tarīqat refers to a spiritual condition. If you do good actions, you will develop that spiritual condition.

We learn from the above incident that because the belief of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* was firm and he was always conscious of the Sharīʿat, he identified the confusion which Shaytān tried to cause. If something has been made unlawful by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how can it become lawful after him? For example, salāh is obligatory. If someone claims that this obligation has fallen off, his claim will not be considered. Belief in the obligation of salāh and carrying it out will apply to every person until the day of Resurrection.

As for the 70 people whom Shaytān had misled, they did not know that the right to make something lawful or unlawful is not enjoyed by anyone after the Prophet *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The obligations of the Sharīʿat will not fall off the shoulders of any person. Because those 70 persons were not firm in their belief, they succumbed to the trap of Shaytān. They assumed that they have reached perfection, so they do not have to do anything now. Consequently, they are destined for the Hell-fire.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* would repeatedly relate the following incident. There was a "saint" in whom all people except one believed. When he woke up for tahajjud and placed his hand on the water-jug to perform wudū', the man [who did not believe in him] stood before him. He asked: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am Jibra'īl's brother. I have come to you to inform you that Allāh *taʿālā* has accepted your worship. He has now absolved you of all acts of worship. Now there is no need for you to perform salāh."

The moment he heard this, he moved his hand away from the water-jug and went back to sleep without even performing two rakʿats in gratitude [for this glad tiding]. He used to lead the people in salāh in the masjid. At fajr time, the congregation waited for quite some time but he did not turn up. The people eventually performed their salāh. They then proceeded to his house, called out to him but he did not reply. They removed the door and went inside. They found him sitting. They asked him: "Hadrat, why didn't you come for the fajr salāh today?" He replied after much hesitation: "The brother of Jibra'īl came to me in the course of the night and informed me that all my acts of worship have been accepted; there is no need for me to perform salāh."

Those who had believed in him remained silent, but the man who had done this burst out laughing. The people concluded that he was behind this mischief and they realized that the "saint" was a foolish worshipper and nothing more. A poet rightly said:

> The end of an ignorant person is the Hell-fire because you will rarely find an ignorant person having a good end.

A LECTURE OF RASŪLULLĀH ﷺ

عن العرباض بن سارية رضي الله عنه قال صلى بنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم ثم أقبل علينا بوجهه فوعظنا موعظة بليغة زرفت منها العيون ووجلت منها القلوب. فقال رجل يا رسول الله، كأن هذه موعظة مودع فأوصنا. فقال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن كان عبدا حبشيا، فإنه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا، فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين. تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ، وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة. رواه أحمد.[1]

Hadrat 'Irbād ibn Sāriyah radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam delivered a very comprehensive lecture to us. Our hearts trembled by it and our eyes shed tears. We said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! This seems to be the admonition of a person bidding farewell. So advise us.' He said: 'I advise you to constantly fear Allāh, and to listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave were to rule over you. Whoever remains alive from among you [after me], will witness many differences of opinion. You should therefore hold on firmly to my Sunnat and the way of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold on to it with the molars. Beware of introducing new things into the religion. Surely every innovation is deviation."

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٠.

A treatment for protection against tribulations

While explaining the above Hadīth, some scholars say that it means: The person who accepts my advice of holding on firmly to Allāh-consciousness, obedience to the ruler and abstaining from corruption and sedition; he will remain in peace notwithstanding the severe differences, many conflicting views and the proliferation of tribulations after me.

Another scholar by the name of Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* says that the essence of this Hadīth is this: Listen attentively to my advice and practise on it with a genuine heart. Major tribulations will come after me. The one who is alive at that time will witness them. There is no way for him to protect himself against them apart from paying heed to my advice.

I say, it is probably for this reason that after saying: "hold on firmly", Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "hold on to it with the molars". This is the only way to escape tribulations, viz. holding on to the Sunnat.

Note: Unfortunately no one is told this nor is anyone – the public and the elite – prepared to pay heed. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The ʿulamā' mention some other points. They are certainly correct in this regard. The author of *Mirqāt* writes that the emphasis on following the Sunnat is absolutely correct because:

تحصيل السعادات الحقيقية بعد مجانبة كل صاحب يفسد الوقت، وكل سبب يفتن القلب منوط باتباع السنة.

The acquisition of true happiness is attached to following the Sunnat provided two other points are given due importance. One is to keep away from every such person who will waste your time. The other is to abstain from every cause which would tempt the heart.

I say, the two are one. In other words, an evil friend who wastes your time is one of the major causes of tempting the heart. Just as a bad friend corrupts your time, he corrupts your heart as well.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very useful piece of advice. (compiler)

The gist of the above is that this friend and companion is from among the temptations of the heart. It is extremely important to keep away from him so that success can be achieved. This entails total adherence to the Sunnat.

Before going into any further explanation of the previously-quoted Hadīth and the explanations which have been given by the scholars, I will present the gist of them. I will then explain the Hadīth further. The following principles are derived from the explanations:

1. Pious company is essential for every type of success and righteousness.
2. A pious person is he who follows the Sunnat. His friendship and enmity are both for Allāh's sake. The nucleus of this is the Sunnat and following the Sunnat.
3. On the other hand, evil company is the cause of every evil characteristic.

4. An evil person is one whose life revolves around his carnal self and following his carnal self.

The Hadīth mentions three points

The Hadīth instructs three things:

1. Choose Allāh-consciousness.
2. Obey the ruler.
3. Hold on firmly to the Sunnat at the time of disputes and differences.

Each one is extremely important, and the one which combines all is following the Sunnat. This is because Allāh-consciousness and obedience to the leader are instructions given by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These two are thus included in his verbal Sunnats. However, they have been mentioned separately because of their importance. The fear of Allāh *taʿālā* guarantees success in the Hereafter. Obedience to the leader ensures the peaceful running of this world. The person who practises on these two pieces of advice will acquire success in both worlds.

A person will only choose Allāh-consciousness when he listens to the words of Allāh *taʿālā* and understands the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. We could rephrase this by saying: When he listens to the Qur'ān and reads it, Allāh-consciousness will develop in his heart. When Allāh-consciousness is developed in the heart, a person undoubtedly saves himself from many evils. And as per the words of the author of *Mirqāt*, the tongue of such a person now wears the reins of the Sharīʿat. This is why I say to you people, wear these reins and see how much you will be able to practise on the Sharīʿat.

An important advice of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

I have been reading this Hadīth to you for several days and explaining its themes to you. When a matter presents itself, how can a person become senseless to it? I read themes of this nature from the Qur'ān and Hadīth so that you could be consoled by them. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* referred to these pieces of advice with the word *wasīyyat*. Allāh *taʿālā* also says:

ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ.

Allāh taʿālā gives you this wasīyyat so that you may understand.

When piety enters the heart, many blessings are acquired. One blessing is that man's mouth becomes shut and he is saved from many calamities. I recall an incident in this regard. A prince could not speak. The king took him on a hunting expedition. Everyone was looking for a prey. The boy's eyes suddenly fell on a buck. In his joy he spoke and said: "There it is." The king and his companions were overjoyed that the boy's speech had been restored. However, when the king returned home, he beat his son and said: "We had been begging you from so many days but you refused to speak. And when you did speak, you did it on seeing an animal!?" Consequently, the boy fell silent once again. He addressed his self: "Did you see? You uttered just three words and you were punished. If you desire your wellbeing, you better remain silent." It seems as though he was a man of Allāh *taʿālā* and was destined to become a great person.

The second point which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught us is obedience to the leader even

if he is an Abyssinian slave. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* obviously obeyed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. At the same time, they obeyed the leader whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appointed over them. They demonstrated their faultlessness in this regard. When Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was removed from the post of commander and one of his juniors was appointed, he fulfilled the duty of obedience to him.

Incidents which display obedience to the leader

There are many unique incidents from the lives of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* on this subject. They were going on jihād. They came to a river. The leader said *Bismillāh* and advanced on his horse. The entire army followed suit. The īmān of the leader was so strong and he had so much of conviction in Allāh's help that he thought to himself that since we have come for the sake of Allāh's Dīn, Allāh alone will help and protect us. After this conviction, he did not consider any difficulty to be an obstacle. The rest of the army also thought that since our leader has fulfilled his duty, we ought to follow him. The īmān of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and their obedience to the leader were matchless.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said that a certain saint used to say: When my conveyance refuses to be bridled or my wife and children do not obey my orders, I conclude that I committed an offence against Allāh's orders. A Hadīth states:

أعمالكم عمالكم

Your actions are your leaders.

This means that the nature of your actions will decide what type of people will rule over you. This is why I say, what are you going to do by becoming a senior when even juniors do not obey you? If juniors refuse to obey their seniors, and in fact, demand of the seniors to obey them, it means that the juniors have become seniors and vice versa. This is known as a reversal of roles. How, then, can rectification be realized?

There was a saint in Thānah Bhawan who used to live in a masjid. He had domesticated a few goats but they never soiled the masjid with their urine and excreta. If a goat needed to relieve itself, it would go out of the masjid.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related the incident of a man who had a horse. When he used to release it, it would go and graze on the land of the saint and nowhere else.

Piety has its effects on animals as well

Look at the level of these saints! When they adopted Allāh-consciousness then even their animals adopted clean and pure habits. From this you can gauge how pious their family members must have been. This is what we say to our people. Come and adopt piety. If we become pious, follow the Sunnat and obey the Sharī'at; it is impossible for our children and subordinates to disobey us and not become pious. When people followed the Sunnat, their animals used to obey them.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related the story of a man who used to breed dogs. An 'ālim reprimanded him by saying that it is not permissible to breed dogs. Although there is no outright prohibition in this regard. There are instances when it is

permissible as per certain Ahādīth. The man did not argue with him. He addressed his dog: "My dear one, go away from here. Nabī Sāhib has prohibited us from breeding dogs." The moment the dog heard this, it got up and headed in a certain direction. No one ever saw it after that. Whether it went to some other place or fell and drowned – no one knew what happened to it.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that there was a saint who was sitting among his people. He was explaining to them as an example: "There are certain special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who, if they order this mountain it will come to them (he pointed to a mountain which was in front of him)." The moment he said this, the mountain quivered and began coming towards him. When the saint saw this, he addressed it: "Stop right there! I did not call you. I am merely explaining an example to these people." Allāh *taʿālā* showed to them that it was this special servant.

Let alone animals, even inanimate things become obedient to those who are obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* and follow the Sunnat. Allāh *taʿālā* subjugates animals and inanimate things to them by virtue of their obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: There is nothing to be astonished about. This can be done as a karāmat because:

كرامة الأولياء حق

The karāmat of the auliyā' is true.

(compiler)

These were the incidents of the saints. Sometimes it happens that a person is nothing but is included

among the saints. If he says something while relying on his pious predecessors, Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils it for him. There was a man in Punjab who used to go around saying: "If I want, I can turn Lahore upside down." When a saint heard this, he said: "He is making such a weighty claim. Let me check if he is worthy of anything or not." The saint checked through his mystical gaze and concluded that he was nothing. He then said: "At least check the status of his shaykh." When he checked, he realized that the shaykh was of that level. He concluded that the man made the claim while relying on his shaykh.

I say, if a person can achieve something by placing his reliance on his shaykh, why will he not achieve it by placing his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*? Allāh *taʿālā* will certainly enable him to fulfil it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how appropriately Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* directed our focus on the power of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is certainly the rank of the men of Allāh. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

To sum up, if a Muslim reads or listens to the Qur'ān, he will acquire piety. He will then acquire many blessings through it, be saved from many evils, and then receive success and wellness in both worlds. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

I received a letter from a person who is employed in a large madrasah. He showered many praises on me. Because he has an affinity with me, he said that this place [referring to Hadrat's khānqāh] is better. However, it is not right to say such a thing because a person ought to search for a thing in the place for which it was meant to be. You cannot compare that madrasah to this place. This place was set up for the sake of rectification and people come here for this reason. Furthermore, the number of people who come here are few, so it is easy to supervise them and see to their needs. Obviously the control which we will be able to exercise here will not be possible there. His comparison of this place with that big madrasah is therefore wrong. Also, he is comparing a place with a large number of students to this place which has so few people. The students there go to seek knowledge. Where will they get the time to become occupied in dhikr and other spiritual practices!? If just their external character and habits are set right, it will be a great achievement. This is an era when people want to be free. The task of training and rectification is not so easy. This is especially so when there is such a large number of students. It is no easy task to supervise them and bring them under one's control. As long as there is no senior person who is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā*, the task or training and rectification cannot be done.

Note: Māshā Allāh, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* exposed the reality in a frank and

straightforward manner. He advised the person in an appropriate manner to abstain from comparing the two places. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn. (compiler)

Rectification of the community is difficult

Dīn is extremely important. In today's times, it is only an expert with insight who is helped by Allāh *taʿālā* that can fulfil this task. This is provided people accept him and have the intention to learn from him. If there is an expert in this field but people have no desire whatsoever of learning from him, how will they acquire excellence and how will total rectification be realized? Just look at our times and see how delicate and fragile everything is! Look at the free-thinking of people! People are totally liberal – in their minds, knowledge and practices; in their Dīn and their worldly matters; in their character and habits and in their actions. There is freedom in everything. It is therefore not easy to convince people to adhere to rules and regulations. It is easy to collect money, it is easy to construct a madrasah; but it is extremely difficult to teach the correct Dīn to people in line with the Sharīʿat. In today's times, if even a little Dīn comes into the lives of people, it will be a great achievement. In fact, if a person just develops this much in his mind that Dīn is something which is very good, then it is a boon and we will say that at least he has īmān. If not today, there is hope for his rectification tomorrow.

Some people want the work of saints to take place in the madāris. This is very difficult. This was possible in the past when the spiritual strength of people was strong and powerful. They could work with it, the public used to pay heed to them and accept their views. That spiritual strength is not found today.

How, then, can the work be done? Whatever work is done at present and however it is done, let it continue. Those who are doing the work know fully well how difficult it is. May Allāh *taʿālā* make it easy for them. Āmīn.

Note: This is a very useful piece of advice. (compiler)

The manner of working in madāris and religious organizations

An office has several supervisors. One is superior to the other. When there are many workers to do the job, it can be supervised properly and systemized. In the same way, an organization which has many people and a lot of work will require many workers. Only then will the work be completed. A single person cannot control the entire organization. Furthermore, all the workers will have to be united to the task.

A madrasah has many teachers and employees. Each one has his own view and opinion. How, then, can unity and harmony be established? How can the work be accomplished in the correct manner? Therefore, as long as there isn't an expert who is followed, acknowledged as the senior, and whatever he says accepted; the work which people are expecting to be accomplished will not be accomplished. Even the intelligentsia of today have realized that as long as a single person is not followed, the work will not be done. This is not because I am saying it. Rather, incidents and experiences have convinced them into accepting this reality. These people consider their intelligence to be sufficient. However, they too are now realizing that they cannot progress without following someone.

I see mutual perplexity. No one has tranquillity of the heart. They consider the manufacture of aeroplanes and other similar inventions to be major successes. But if there is no tranquillity in the heart, what is the benefit of all this? As long as personal opinions are not set aside and a knowledgeable and expert person is not followed in every matter, the work will not progress.

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

إذا رأيت شحا مطاعا، وهوى متبعا، ودنياه مؤثرة، وإعجاب كل ذي رأي برأيه، ورأيت أمرا لا بد لك منه فعليك نفسك ودع أمر العوام.[1]

When you see miserliness being obeyed, carnal desires followed, each person considering his own view to be the best then adhere to yourself and worry about its own rectification.

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had spoken against this very long ago. People are realizing it only now that the man of intelligence must be followed. There is no alternative to it. Because these people have discarded religion and opposed it, where will they ever have the courage to admit their folly!?

I was speaking on the subject of the person who wrote a letter in which he complained about the absence of practice and sincerity in the madrasah. It is because of this that the Ahlullāh separated their work from it a long time ago. That is, they separated the work of knowledge from the work of action and practice. This is why the practice now is that after acquiring knowledge in a madrasah, students

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٣٧.

proceed to a khānqāh. The saints have realized that confining one's self to studying and imparting knowledge results in action coming to an end. The person remains confined to the circle of knowledge. The real treasure of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and spiritual affiliation which has been coming down from heart to heart and regarding which Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* said: "The affiliation of the Sufis is the greatest boon" was gradually decreasing and coming to an end. They saw the need and established a place [khānqāh] which was separate from the madrasah. They devoted this place for action and practice. They taught dhikr and other spiritual practices so that people may choose to live practical lives and acquire the fundamental treasure.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* himself went to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He felt the need, that is why he went to him. He must have felt something lacking within him which prompted him to go. Someone asked him about Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* if he was an ʿālim. He replied: "He was a producer of ʿulamā'." He also used to say: "People have confidence in Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* because of his actions, but I have confidence in him because of his knowledge."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were studying under Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. They were discussing among themselves and someone from them

suggested that they should pledge bay'at to Maulānā [Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*]. Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* said: "No. I am going to pledge bay'at to Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* was a student of Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh*. The latter himself was a saint. Despite this, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* pledged bay'at to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. There must have been something in Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for these senior personalities to pledge bay'at at his hands.

The fact of the matter is that whatever the saints did, they did with sincerity. They used to practise on what was established from the Qur'ān and Sunnat. They presented practical examples of the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. People used to go to them and learn this. They used to acquire the habits and character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* by virtue of remaining in their company.

A madrasah is a place of knowledge. The Dīnī sciences are served there. The Qur'ān and Sunnat is taught. After all, it is essential to preserve the Islamic sciences such as tafsīr and Hadīth, and it is necessary to know what is lawful and what is not. Therefore, do not be opposed to the madrasah. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I had given the suggestion of establishing Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband. And I made du'ā' for it. It came into existence after that."

Did you see! On one hand he established a madrasah, and on the other side he produced

Ahlullāh and rendered spiritual services. This is because Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* understood that there is a need for both. It is necessary to go and acquire knowledge from the madrasah. If you do not see the teachings and character of the saints in the madrasah, do not complain about it. Confine yourself to your work. Yes, if you are a real man, then develop people who are able to render spiritual services.

To sum up, there is a need for the madrasah because that is where you acquire knowledge of the lawful and unlawful. There is also a need for the company of the saints so that you can acquire spiritual benefits from them, and create Allāh's love in your heart. Both are necessary, and each require a time of its own. There is no contradiction between the two. If there is, then it is like performing salāh and not giving zakāh. Performing salāh will not make up for the obligation of zakāh. Both will have to be fulfilled independently. This is why we see that most of the senior 'ulamā' of the past had went and presented themselves before a shaykh and acquired spiritual treasures from him. The Sufis too reverted to the 'ulamā' to learn rules and regulations. We conclude that there is a need for both. Understand this well.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very comprehensive subject. It proves the comprehensiveness of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable all Muslims, especially his associates, to appreciate this and inspire them to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHARĪʿAT AND THE REALITY OF DREAMS

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*:

أوصيكم بالاهتمام في الاقتراب بالله تعالى والاجتهاد في طاعته فانها جماع الخير وملاك الأمر وكن حنيفا لا تشرك بالله شيئا لا جليا ولا خفيا، وإياك ومحدثات الأمور فإنها ضلالة، وإياك والالتفات إلى أقوام يسمون بالمتفلسفة وأولئك قد أضلهم الله على علم وحبسهم في مدركتهم فلا يستطيعون عنها محيصا.

فإن شئت تحقيق الأمر وتدقيق السر فليس علمهم بذلك ولكن علم يوخذ من منبع الشريعة بعد الطاعات والاقترابات، قال الله تعالى: فاتبعوني أهدكم سبيل الرشاد.

I advise you to pay particular attention to gaining proximity to Allāh taʿālā and to strive hard in His obedience. These are the things which combine all good and are most useful. Remain a hanīf – i.e. do not ascribe any partner to Allāh taʿālā, neither obvious nor subtle. Keep away from innovations in Dīn because they are misguidance. Beware of paying any attention to those who call themselves philosophers. Allāh taʿālā led them astray despite their knowledge, confined them to their own theories; and so, they cannot escape them.

If you want to investigate this matter further and to fathom its mysteries, know well that their knowledge is not really knowledge. Real knowledge is the one

which is acquired from the fountainhead of the Sharīʿat after having obeyed Allāh taʿālā and sought His proximity. Allāh taʿālā says: Follow me and I will show you the path of rectitude.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* sends out a very powerful message. If you want to become an erudite scholar, you can never realize this by studying the books of the philosophers. They are very far away from the path. Deep knowledge and fathoming of mysteries can only be acquired from knowledge whose fountainhead is the Sharīʿat. The philosophers have no affinity whatsoever with this. They haven't even passed by the alley of the Sharīʿat. They do not accept the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are the fountainheads of the Sharīʿat. On the contrary, they follow the dictates of their intelligence and have made it their ruler. Their every opinion is against the Sharīʿat and in conflict with it. The ʿulamā' should therefore seek knowledge from the fountainhead of the Sharīʿat. They must hold on to the Qur'ān and Sunnat in every matter. Unfortunately, the condition of scholars today is extremely strange. They submit before the philosophers without realizing what they really are.

There was a Maulānā in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan who used to teach *Mebdhī*. He used to remain fully engrossed and attached with this book. He used to join us for the after-ʿasr walks. On one of the days, a senior man who was most probably employed in a school joined us for our walk. The Maulānā asked him: "How does the rain come down?" The man read the following verse of the Qur'ān:

وَاللهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلٰى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ.

It is Allāh who sends the winds which then raise up the cloud. We then drive it towards a dead land and thereby give life to the land after it had been lifeless. In like manner shall be the Resurrection.[1]

The Maulānā Sāhib was stunned when he heard this reply and did not utter a word until maghrib. Look! That Maulānā used to be with Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* but he had no affinity with the Qur'ān. On the other hand, a man who was employed in a school answered his question by quoting a verse from the Qur'ān. The Maulānā ought to have quoted the verse. There were many who were attached to schools who used to come to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, learn from him and depart. On the other hand, many of those who were employed in madāris and others living nearby remained as they were [without benefiting from Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*]. What a sad state of affairs!

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* pointed to a very important point. We ought to take it as an admonishment. (compiler)

In his *Tafhīmāt* and other similar books, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* discusses the issues of the philosophers and logicians as though they are nothing. You just read what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said – that the knowledge of the philosophers will not avail you. Rather, the

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[1] Sūrah al-Fātir, 35: 9.

knowledge which you acquire after worship and obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* will raise you to the level of erudition. Now read what Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* has to say in this regard:

> If a person wants to understand the mysteries of the Sharīʿat and solve the difficult sciences of monotheism he must cast aside his intellect and personal opinions, and make the Sharīʿat of Allāh *taʿālā* his guide.

This contains an explicit order to put the Sharīʿat before your own opinion. Now look at what you are doing. You are giving preference to your own opinion in every matter. A man passed away in a certain place. His wife said: "The essential thing about the ʿiddat is to mourn the husband's death. What is the need to observe the ʿiddat in the same house? One can mourn and express grief anywhere." Did you see! This woman is presenting the underlying reason for the ʿiddat [according to her own understanding]. I said: "The order to observe the ʿiddat is laid down in the Qur'ān. There is no need for you to explain the reason for it. You have to merely follow the order of the Sharīʿat. You do not have the right to find underlying reasons."

Note: Nowadays many men also make statements of this nature. It is a clear sign of their lack of intelligence and misunderstanding. (compiler)

When kashf is given preference over the Sharīʿat

The Shaykh also said: Giving preference to kashf over an explicit text [of the Qur'ān or Hadīth] is absolute falsehood. Many of those who experience kashf become confused. The fact of the matter is that genuine kashf is generally in line with the Sharīʿat

(kashf which is against the Sharīʿat will therefore be incorrect). A person who gives preference to his kashf over the Sharīʿat will be expelled from the group of the Ahlullāh and included among those who are in total loss as regards their actions. This is a clear indication that the Sharīʿat is given preference over kashf. If giving preference to kashf over an explicit text is so severely prohibited, what can be said of the poor intellect!? How can it be given preference over the Sharīʿat?

Sunan Ibn Mājah contains a Hadīth which states that Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* saw a man stealing. However, when he asked the man about it, he took an oath and said that he did not steal. Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* said:

آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ كَذَبَتْ بَصَرِيْ

I believe in Allāh. It is my eyes which have erred.

He said this because a person cannot take an oath in Allāh's name and then speak a lie. This incident is a practical demonstration of the Hadīth which was quoted previously:

من حلف بالله فليرض

When a person takes an oath in Allāh's name, he should be accepted and believed.[1]

Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* is a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*. He is saying to the man: Since you are taking an oath and denying it, I cannot say anything to you. I am saying to my self that my eyes erred.

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[1] *Hāshiyah Ibn Mājah*, p. 153.

The Shaykh (Shaykh Akbar) also said: When a person experiences a kashf which makes lawful something which is clearly unlawful in the Sharīʿat of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then it is obligatory on him to discard his kashf and practise on the Sharīʿat. All the people of kashf concur that after the end of prophet-hood and messenger-ship, no one has the right to make the lawful unlawful and vice versa. He goes at length in explaining this subject. He then says: "O my brothers! You must be forever vigilant and safeguard yourselves from the evils of kashf (which occur occasionally). I desired your wellbeing and fulfilled my responsibility. If you still do this, you will be from among those who are the worst losers as regards their actions and be expelled from the group of Ahlullāh."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's special address to the intelligentsia

The Shaykh addressed the people of kashf and said: "O my brothers! You must be forever vigilant and safeguard yourselves from the evils of kashf (which occur occasionally)."

I address the intelligentsia of today: O my brothers! O you intelligent ones! Be on your guard and protect yourself against the harms and evils of your intelligence and self-opinions. Never give precedence to your intelligence over the Sharīʿat. This is downright misguidance and deviation. The Ahlullāh are prohibiting the giving of precedence to kashf over the Sharīʿat. What, then, can be said of your intelligence? Nowadays you don't even see kashf and other similar phenomena. There are just dreams. I continually receive letters in which people relate their dreams to me. I just received a letter of this nature. I wrote to the person that dreams are not to be relied

on because every dream is not a true dream. There are many types of dreams. The following Hadīth is related in *Muwattā Imām Mālik*:

عن يحيي بن سعيد عن أبي سلمة بن عبد الرحمن أنه قال سمعت أبا قتادة بن ربعي يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول الرؤيا الصالحة من الله والحلم من الشيطان. فإذا رأى أحدكم الشيء يكره فلينفث عن يساره ثلاث مرات، وليتعوذ بالله من شرها فإنه لن تضره إن شاء الله تعالى. قال أبو سلمة إن كنت لأرى الرؤيا وهي أثقل علي من الجبل، فلما سمعت هذا الحديث فما كنت أباليها.

...Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A good dream is from Allāh taʿālā while a disturbing dream is from Shaytān. If any of you sees something which disturbs him, he should spit three times on his left side and seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā from its evil. If Allāh wills, it will never harm him. Abū Salamah [the narrator of the Hadīth] said: "I used to see dreams which used to be weightier than a mountain for me. Once I heard this Hadīth, I stopped bothering about dreams.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his commentary to this Hadīth:

فيه بيان أنه ليس كل ما يراه الإنسان في منامه يكون صحيحا، إنما الصحيح منه ما كان من الله يأتيك ملك الرؤيا من نسخة أم الكتاب وما سوى ذلك أضغاث أحلام لا تأويل لها، وهي على أنواع. قد تكون من فعل الشيطان يلعب بالإنسان أو يريد ما يحزنه. وأمر النبي صلى

الله عليه وسلم في ذلك بأن يبصق عن يساره ويتعوذ بالله منه كأنه يقصد به طرده وأحزانه. وقد تكون من حديث النفس كمن يكون في أمر أو حرفة ترى نفسه في ذلك الأمر والعاشق يرى معشوقه.

وقد يكون ذلك من مزاج الطبيعة كمن غلب عليه الدم يرى الفصد والرعاف والحمرة، ومن غلب عليه الصفراء يرى النار والأشياء الصفر، ومن غلب عليه السوداء يرى الظلمة الأشياء أسود والأهوال والموت، ومن غلب عليه البلغم يرى البياض والمياه الثلج، ولا تأويل لشيء من هذه الأقسام.

We learn from this that everything which a person sees in a dream is not necessarily true. A true dream is the one which is from Allāh taʿālā. The angel of dreams comes with it from the Preserved Tablet. Anything apart from this are imaginary dreams for which there is no interpretation. There are several types of dreams which fall under this category. Sometimes it is an act of Shayṯān who is playing around with the person and wanting to cause him worry. It is with reference to such a dream that Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam ordered us to spit three times on our left side and to seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā. In so doing, the person is – so to speak – driving Shayṯān away and causing him grief and worry. Sometimes a dream is a result of what a person was constantly thinking about [in the course of the day or in the recent past]. Like a person is engrossed in a certain matter or some job; he sees himself in that situation. The same can be said of a lover who dreams of his beloved.

Sometimes a dream is a result of a person’s temperament. For example, a person’s body is overwhelmed by blood, so he will see bloodletting, nose-bleeding, and redness. A person’s body may be overwhelmed by yellow bile, so he will see the fire or yellow things. Another may be overwhelmed by black bile, so he sees darkness, black things, terrifying things and death. Yet another may be overwhelmed by phlegm, so he sees whiteness, water, ice and so on. There is no interpretation for dreams of this nature.

We learn from the explanation of H̱aḏrat Shāh S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh* that every dream is not a true dream, and every dream is not to be interpreted. Sometimes it is from Shayṯān and sometimes it is dictated by one’s temperament.

When anyone used to write to H̱aḏrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raẖimahullāh* about dreams, he would reply: “Write about things related to wakefulness. Dreams cannot be trusted.” The fact of the matter is that a dream is influenced by what happens when a person is awake. When his wakefulness is good, he will see good dreams. The opposite is also true. The dreams of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are always true. The dreams of the laity are mostly false. Qāḏī Thanā’ullāh S̱āẖib Pānīpattī *raẖimahullāh* writes in *Irshād aṯ-Ṯālibīn*:

> The purer one’s mirror of thoughts, the more genuine will be one’s kashf and dreams. The dreams of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are classified as absolute revelation. This is because they are divinely protected from error, their thoughts are totally pure and so is their

internal self.[1] The dreams of the auliyā' are mostly true because they have acquired purity of thoughts and internal effulgence by virtue of their direct or indirect companionship with the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* and their practising on the Sharī'at.

Dreams should not be related to all and sundry

Now understand one more point. When relating your dream, ensure you relate it to a person who is an expert in the interpretation of dreams. Never relate it to an ignorant person or someone who intends evil. Sometimes a person sees a terrifying dream but it has a very good interpretation.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was an expert in this field. A person saw a dream in which he was urinating on the Qur'ān. The man became terrified and worried, and thought that he has gone astray. He came to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and related the dream to him. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "Your son will be a hāfiz of the Qur'ān." Another man saw a dream in which he was standing on the tongue of Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām*. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said to him: "There is a verse of the Qur'ān under your musallā (prayer mat)." When the man checked, there was in fact a verse of the Qur'ān

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[1] If the dreams of the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* are classified as absolute revelation, is it possible for them to commit an error in a state of wakefulness? Certainly not. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā* from having blasphemous beliefs about the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. (compiler)

under his musallā. Just look at the interpretation of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*!

This is why I say, a dream should only be related to an expert. If not, the [unqualified] person will give a wrong interpretation. And generally, a dream is realized according to its interpretation. One has to be extremely cautious in this regard and abstain from relating it to all and sundry. Understand this well. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

A TREATMENT FOR A CORRUPT TEMPERAMENT

An ʿālim from a central institute wrote: "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder. I am finding bitter things to be sweet and vice versa."

The fact of the matter is that our temperaments and "taste buds" are getting spoilt. Our sense of taste is changing, so no food appears to be tasty no matter how exotic it may be. When a person falls ills, his mouth becomes bitter so he finds everything to be bitter. It is not the fault of the food but his taste buds. Once their health is restored, he will perceive sweet things to be sweet. The way to do this is for the patient to go to a doctor and have his ailment treated. Once it is treated, his sense of taste will be restored and he will get the correct taste of each thing.

In the same way, the temperaments of everyone – the masses and the elite – have become spoilt. Their hearts are totally corrupted. There is a need to rectify the internal self and the taste of the heart needs to be restored. It will be corrected when īmān becomes firmly embedded in it. This is not the work of the tongue, a talk or lecture; it is through the rectification of the heart. What is the benefit in merely writing that sweet things are tasting bitter and vice versa? You should rather worry about rectifying the internal self and embedding the heart with īmān. Then you will see how conditions will change.

It is true that this is an era of rejection. No one is prepared to pay heed to another. This is why difficulty is experienced in the task. How should the

task be accomplished? Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says:

> If there are thousands who are seekers and just one is a non-seeker, then the Messenger too desists from the messenger-ship.

At the same time, he adds:

> Mysteries are known to the knower of mysteries alone. The rejecter does not even consider them to be mysteries. In other words, he does not listen to them with value with which he ought to. Actually, mysteries should not even be mentioned to him.
>
> However, (we did not take this obstacle into consideration. Rather, we acted on the norm of Allāh *taʿālā*). A call was made by Allāh *taʿālā*, so there is no question of accepting it or not accepting it.
>
> <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Nū<u>h</u> *ʿalayhis salām* invited to Allāh *taʿālā* for 900 years but his people's rejection increased by the day.
>
> Did he stop inviting towards Allāh? Did he go into solitude in the cave of silence?
>
> Has any caravan turned back merely because of the noise and barking of dogs?
>
> Did the speed of the moon drop just because of the howling dogs?
>
> The moon continues dispersing its light while the dog continues howling. Each one remains resolute on its nature.

> This is because Allāh *taʿālā* decreed a certain task for each one. Each one is therefore put to a test according to his personal capability.

The essence is that man must set right his īmān. He must develop honesty and sincerity within him, and remain devoted to his work. It is in Allāh's hands to make the conditions conducive and favourable. We have to continue doing the work and conveying the truth. The one with true ears will pay heed and make the intention to reform his internal self. Allāh *taʿālā* will embed īmān in his heart and reform his internal self.

Note: By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this is a very beautiful teaching. We ought to engrave it on our hearts. This is especially so in the present unfavourable conditions where governments which are antagonistic towards Islam are holding sway. It becomes essential to practise on these teachings. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related that there was a man who was slicing cucumbers and feeding them to his attendant. The thought occurred to him that he should also taste one slice. The moment he placed it in his mouth, he found it so bitter that he spat it out immediately. He asked his attendant: "You are eating these cucumbers but you are not complaining that they are bitter!?" The attendant replied: "It will be so unjust to complain about this one occasion of feeding me bitter cucumbers when you have been feeding me so many sweet things for so long."

The benefit of love for Allāh

I related this incident while discussing the point that something bitter can be made sweet. The love and affinity of Allāh *taʿālā* sometimes causes the bitter accusations and opposition of people. The ʿulamā' and the laymen must bear this. This is why I said at the beginning that you must set right your "taste buds". There are many things of this world which are bitter but the Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* and auliyā' made them sweet. You too should follow in their path so that you start finding bitter things to be sweet. What I mean by this is that you must develop love for the Ahlullāh and connect your heart to Allāh *taʿālā*. You should also read the writings of the Ahlullāh. These are things which you have to do. You should pay particular attention to the duʿā' of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*:

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ.

O our Sustainer! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers. Forgive us, O our Sustainer! You alone are almighty, wise.[1]

An enlightening point on temptations

The other point which the person had written in his letter is that "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught us how to save ourselves from tribulations and temptations. He made this duʿā':

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 5.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

Tribulations are deferred through duʿā’

Just imagine with what emotion Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made this duʿā’! Can a tribulation descend after such a duʿā’? When any tribulation descends, it descends from Allāh *taʿālā*. A duʿā’ too is made to Allāh *taʿālā*. The duʿā’ climbs up to the heavens while divine decree descends. The duʿā’ clashes with it and stops it from descending further. In this way, the duʿā’ prevents the tribulation from coming down.

A H̲adīth states:

لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء.

Only duʿā’ repulses divine decree.

The duʿā’ which I quoted above is also from a H̲adīth. When we teach duʿā’s of this nature and show people the way to protect themselves against tribulations, they want to stop coming here. This is why I say, if you have no intention of learning anything and do not want to do anything, then just remain in your homes and continue to be inundated by tribulations. Why do you come here to us and waste our time? Listen to one other point. You are already witnessing the consequences of tribulations and paying the price for them. You should prepare for the punishment of the Hereafter which will be much more severe. I am speaking to you in line with your conditions; do not

feel offended. I am forced to say these things because someone felt helpless and wrote to me saying: “Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder.”

Unfortunately, people from different places invite me even though I am so ill. Now how many places can I go to? This is why it is necessary for people to come here, learn the work and then continue the work. Only then can something be achieved – inshā Allāh.

A treatment for tribulations

If tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder, does it mean that they cannot be rectified? Does it mean that the hearts cannot come right? They certainly can because Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā’ for refuge from external and internal tribulations and temptations. You should therefore make this duʿā’ of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* your practice. Allāh willing, the hearts will be rectified and they will be protected against tribulations.

You have just heard this. Now together with this we read the Qur’ān, and the Qur’ān has rendered tribulations and temptations into smithereens. They can never approach a believer [provided he is a true believer]. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 41.

The evil consequences of tribulations are worse in the Hereafter

The above was a description of the condition of a believer. The following is a description of the condition of an unbeliever:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the life of this world, Hell alone is his abode.

We learn from this that an unbeliever rebels and transgresses, and gives preference to this worldly life over the Hereafter. Consequently, he will be cast into the Hell-fire.

The true mark of a believer is that he does not transgress and does not give preference to this worldly life over the Hereafter. He constantly fears the Hell-fire.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said: "When man fears standing before Allāh *taʿālā*, he melts out of fear of Him just as salt melts in water." The fear of standing before Allāh *taʿālā* is no small thing. To be constantly aware of standing before Allāh *taʿālā* is a very powerful treatment for removing the heart from tribulations and temptations. However, this will only happen when attention is paid to it. You strive to have your children educated and to become hāfiz and ʿālim. In the same way, the sciences of the Ahlullāh can be conveyed to them. Unfortunately, these same sciences are considered to be bitter and no sweetness is perceived in them. I have already explained the reason for this, viz. your taste buds have been corrupted. You will have to set them right and take the medication which is needed for them. In other

words, study the words and life-conditions of the Ahlullāh. Your taste buds will then come right.

The unbelievers find discussions about īmān to be bitter

Listen! The unbelievers find īmān and everything related to īmān to be bitter. On the other hand, a believer finds them sweet and enjoyable. The Ahlullāh find the most sweetness in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and occupying their selves with Him.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* states that the supernatural feats (karāmāt) which are manifested at the hands of the Sufis are as a result of their total enjoyment of obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* in private and public. In other words, the most enjoyable thing in their sight is obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*. They enjoy it in privacy and in public. Their enjoyment in public is when they speak about Allāh *taʿālā* and advise people about Him. Their enjoyment in private is when they occupy themselves in Allāh's remembrance. Now the people of our time find this to be very bitter. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

I am not saying these things merely to make you happy. Rather, I am saying them to make Allāh *taʿālā* happy and to please Him. Whether you are happy or unhappy does not bother me. I do not desire your pleasure or displeasure. The letter which I read to you in which the person wrote, "temptations have rendered the hearts asunder" came from a person of a large madrasah. He is describing the condition of the people of the madrasah. It is extremely sorrowful. May Allāh *taʿālā* rectify all of us.

I received a letter from America in which it is stated that a man wrote to his friend saying:

> I received two issues of *Maʿrifat-e-H̲aqq*…I cannot describe the joy which I experienced. I stopped reading everything else and spent two nights reading these two issues. I made duʿā’ for H̲ad̲rat. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep his shadow for a long time over us. May our actions be rectified through the blessings of his presence. Āmīn.

Now look! Here is a man in America and this is his condition. He spent several hours of the night reading *Maʿrifat-e-H̲aqq*. He says that H̲ad̲rat is supervising him and he cannot describe his condition because it is connected to the heart. Look at his condition and think about your own condition. He is enjoying a certain spiritual condition while you have no condition at all. You have merely words and you want to compete with those who have a special spiritual condition! We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen! Many of those who come here have already been to senior saints who were men of great spiritual conditions. However, those who went to them did not acquire their conditions. This is the general condition of people even though they go to the saints frequently. On the other hand, we have a man in America who has reached a high spiritual condition. Together with that he has become a teacher and tutor to the Americans. He translates our articles and reads them to the Americans. Here we are deprived of a spiritual condition and yet we are holding on to words which contradict spiritual conditions. If you go in this way to a man of spiritual conditions for a thousand years, you will not acquire a spiritual condition. I generally quote the following couplet to describe this deplorable condition:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love of idols did not leave him. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

This Dīn has been sent by Allāh *taʿālā* to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* will make arrangements for its preservation. Had you become the means for its preservation, it would have been to your advantage. If you are not going to do this, Allāh *taʿālā* will create others for it and preserve the Dīn through them.

A duʿā' for treating tribulations and temptations

Listen! The way to protect yourself from tribulations is to make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. I already taught you one duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

The other duʿā' is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ اَوَّلَ هٰذَا النَّهَارِ صَلَاحًا، وَّاَوْسَطَهُ فَلَاحًا، وَّاٰخِرَهُ نَجَاحًا.

O Allāh! Make the first portion of this day into righteousness, the middle portion into prosperity, and the last portion into success.

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I read this duʿā' the moment I wake up in the morning. I am then in the protection of Allāh *taʿālā* for the rest of the day and I am convinced that no one can harm me in any way."

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to emphasise this duʿā’ on us. In fact, he used to say that we should make it several times during the day. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

The Ahlullāh read these duʿā’s and come under the protection of Allāh *taʿālā*. They read them punctually in the morning and evening. Consequently, Allāh’s help is with them all the time. We ought to make a habit of reading duʿā’s of this nature.

There are many people who come to us, but they come here with their bodies only. They leave their souls at home. Even when they go for hajj, they leave their souls behind. They have no souls, only their bodies remain. We are complaining about you while our own condition is the same. Just as you are devoid of spiritual conditions, so are we. Even our madāris are devoid of souls. They have strayed very far away.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at what pain and concern he is encouraging us towards spirituality. It is essential for us to focus on it. (compiler)

مالك بلغه أن عيسى بن مريم كان يقول لا تكثروا الكلام بغير ذكر الله فتقسوا قلوبكم. فإن القلب القاسي بعيد من الله ولكن لا تعلمون. ولا تنظروا في ذنوب الناس كأنكم أرباب وانظروا في ذنوبكم كأنكم عبيد، فإنما الناس مبتلى ومعافى، فارحموا على أهل البلاء واحمدوا الله على العافية.[1]

[1] جمع الفوائد: ج ٢، ص ٢٧٨.

Hadrat Imām Mālik rahimahullāh relates that Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām used to say: Do not engage in too much of speech except for Allāh's remembrance or else your hearts will become hard. A hard heart is very far from Allāh taʿālā but because this distance is a metaphysical distance, you do not perceive it. Do not look at the sins of people as though you are lords over them. Rather, look at your own sins as though you are sinful servants. After all, there are people who are caught up in sins and those who are safe from them. Therefore show mercy to those who are caught up in sins, and praise Allāh taʿālā for those who are safe from them.

This is a point which can only be made by a Prophet. This Hadīth not only prohibits pride over those who are sinners, but proves the virtue of showing mercy to them. This is the salient characteristic of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. What right, then, do those who follow the Prophets have to deviate from their path? In other words, if the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are saying this, those who believe and follow them ought to do the same.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* quotes this Hadīth in *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq* and he used to read it to us. We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to practise on these teachings. Āmīn. (compiler)

Two types of karāmat

Yesterday I explained to you that there are two types of karāmat. One is the creed of the Ahl as-Sunnat wa al-Jamāʿat and the other is steadfastness on acts of obedience. In this regard, I present to you the conditions of the Ahlullāh. Their statements, teachings, actions and conditions have been preserved in books so that people do not deviate from

the straight path. If you do not read them, misguidance will creep in. If you are not going to know the conditions of the Ahlullāh, how will you be able to speak like them? How will you be able to act like them?

I just made to you the point that the greatest karāmat in this worldly life is to remain steadfast on the straight path and to acquire Allāh's pleasure under all conditions. Had it not been recorded in the books, how would it have reached us? People in the past heard these things and conveyed them until they reached us through their books. If you are not going to listen to these things, how will you understand them and how will you practise on them?

Note: There is a pressing need for writing and compiling books. This is also an important department of Dīn. The blasphemous writings of those who are on falsehood can only be rebutted by the Islamic writings of those who are on the truth. This is why 'ulamā' have to continue rendering this service with sincerity, devotion, concern and worry. (compiler)

I remind you once again of what that scholar wrote: "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder." I say, there are countless people whose torn-apart hearts were mended by studying the books of the saints. Why do you not pick up their books and study them? This is how conditions can be changed. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote a book devoted to the life-conditions of the saints. It is titled *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī al-Chishtīyyah al-'Alīyyah*. He writes:

> Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* relates the story of Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn Ganj Shakkar

> *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* in *Akhbār al-Akhyār*. On one occasion, his attendant bought salt for him on account. When the food was presented to the Shaykh at the time of if<u>t</u>ār, the Shaykh perceived through his internal effulgence and said: "I am getting the smell of unnecessary expenses in this food. It is not permissible for me to eat it." He did not eat the food.

Shaykh Ni<u>z</u>ām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* fell extremely ill on the night of the 5th of Mu<u>h</u>arram. He performed the ʿishā <u>s</u>alāh with congregation and lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness after one hour, he asked: "Did I perform the ʿishā <u>s</u>alāh?" The people replied in the affirmative. He said: "Okay, let me perform it again. No one knows what is to happen." He performed the <u>s</u>alāh again and lost consciousness. This time he remained unconscious for two hours. When he regained consciousness he asked: "Did I perform the ʿishā <u>s</u>alāh?" The people replied: "You have performed it two times." He said: "Okay, let me perform it one more time." He performed it a third time and passed away while repeating the words:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ اَسْتَغِيْثُ

O the ever-living! The maintainer of all. I beg for Your mercy.

To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Are the stories of the auliyā' not good enough to take some effect from them? Can the taste buds of īmān not be changed through them? If you read their stories you will acquire spiritual rejuvenation.

We cannot awaken the community with anything apart from the speech of the Ahlullāh. The Muslim community can be revived only through it. This is because the Ahlullāh themselves are alive and so is their speech. The person who absorbs their speech also comes to life.

The fruit of having confidence in the Ahlullāh

A man was travelling with the intention of presenting himself before H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*. He hadn't reached as yet when he said to his companion: "There is no doubt that H̲ad̲rat is a walī. At the same time I have no doubt about my own deprivation because I have been frequenting him for so long but let alone acquiring the spiritual conditions of the saints, I am not even giving up sins."

H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* learnt of their conversation through kashf. He directed his spiritual focus on the man in such a way that he began giving up sins immediately. The man himself relates: "H̲ad̲rat pulled me towards him in such a way that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot."

This is why I say you must not have doubts in the Ahlullāh. If you want to have any doubts, have them against your own self. Check your own self and you will benefit from it. You may well receive the spiritual focus of a saint and achieve your objective. As was the case with the above person who was still going to meet H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh*. Even when he wanted to commit a sin he couldn't.

I am reading to you the speech of the Ahlullāh because it has emanated from their hearts, and it contains themes of cognition. This is why it has an effect and it will convey you to Allāh *taʿālā*. The

ʿulamāʾ have rendered a phenomenal service by compiling the speeches of the Ahlullāh in books. People are guided in this way. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Note: I had to put in a lot of effort to simplify this article. The fact of the matter is that it is a result of Allāh *taʿālā* enabling me to simplify it. May Allāh *taʿālā* accept this flawed effort of ours through His grace and make articles of this nature useful to the Muslim community. Āmīn. (compiler)

A TREATMENT FOR TRIBULATIONS

This is certainly an era of tribulations. When the Muslim community accepted the path of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as explained by the ʿulamā', the community accepted rectification and reformation. But when it discarded this path, rectification also left it. The system which the ʿulamā' had adopted was to first develop īmān within the people. The seriousness of Dīn and the greatness of the Qur'ān were to be filled in their hearts. To this end, it was necessary to present to them the exact condition and situation in which they found themselves. They were told: Look! This is your present condition. The era which you are going through is really a serious tribulation. You are being put through tests and tribulations. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had sought refuge from it:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

There are various tribulations which descend from above. For example, floods, droughts, large swarms of locusts, hailstorms, and so on. Man becomes incapable and powerless to put an end to these tribulations.

In the same way, another type of tribulation falls upon man. Everyone – the masses and the elite are encompassed by it and it becomes extremely difficult

for them to extricate themselves from it. Man can only come out of it if Allāh *taʿālā* removes him.

I came across a chapter titled *al-Fitan* (tribulations) in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. I was overjoyed because I found the thing which I had been searching for. The thing which I learnt from it is that we are caught up in various types of tribulations, and the manner in which we can save ourselves from them.

Al-Fitan

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* lists all the tribulations which people have to face. The first tribulation which is the root of other tribulations is the tribulation of man's carnal self. This tribulation is intrinsic to man and is therefore at the head of the list. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* defines this tribulation as follows:

أن يقسو قلبه ولا يجد حلاوة الإطاعة ولا لذة المناجاة.

The person's heart becomes hard, and he does not experience the sweetness of obedience nor the enjoyment of private conversation with Allāh taʿālā.

He either gives up obedience and private conversation entirely, or he does them but is deprived of their joy. A narration states that excessive talking without the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* results in hard-heartedness. And a hard heart is furthest away from Allāh *taʿālā*. Since this person is far from Allāh *taʿālā*, it is not far-fetched for him to not fulfil Allāh's rights, will not carry out acts of obedience, be immersed in sins, and not give any importance to orders and prohibitions. If he can discard the rights of Allāh *taʿālā*, he will do the same

to the rights of fellow creatures. If he is not Allāh's, how can he be of anyone or anything else? Hard-heartedness inevitably results in the trampling of rights. This is the fruit of hard-heartedness. It is not restricted to not carrying out the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* such as salāh and fasting, rather, if he does not fulfil the orders of the higher authority, how will he fulfil lesser orders!? In short, he will fail to fulfil all types of rights.

I say, if Dīn and religious people appear good in the sight of a person, it will certainly benefit him – inshā Allāh. This is because if a person considers Dīn and people of Dīn to be good, it is a proof of his īmān. It establishes the fact that he is a believer. As for his misdeeds, they are proof of his *fisq* – flagrant sinning; and a *fāsiq* (flagrant sinner) is still a believer. Allāh *taʿālā* will pardon him by virtue of his īmān. It is generally noticed that when there is īmān in the heart of a person, he gets the inspiration to do good deeds at some time in the future. Thus, it is expected of those who have good thoughts about Dīn and people of Dīn that they too will start doing the works of Dīn. On the other hand, the one who is averse to Dīn and people of Dīn, he is in a dangerous situation. It is people like him who are classified as hard-hearted, and regarding whom the Hadīth states that he is far from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* says that man is made up of three departments.

1. The heart. It is the origin of fear and love, retraction and expansion, anger and bravery, and life. The heart has been created for the development of these qualities.

2. The intellect. It is the origin of sciences and knowledge. It has been created for the sciences.
3. The temperament. It is the origin of all human needs. It earns and obtains human needs.

The perfection of these three results is the perfection of man, and their defectiveness results in the defectiveness of man. Man's perfection through the heart enables him to surpass angels. The same can be said of his intellect. The intellect is the fundamental distinction between man and animals. In the same way, if man submits to the demands of his temperament and discards his intelligence, then he is included among the animals. It is the job of the intellect to maintain the temperament within its limits and not to allow it to transgress them.

Understand this point further: There is man, Shaytān and animals. If man remains within his appointed limits, he is man. If he accepts satanic deceptions – whether in a state of wakefulness or in a dream – then he is a devil from mankind. If he does not remain within the limits of his temperament as per the dictates of his intellect, then he is an animal. This is simple to understand, but the changes in times have placed a veil on this.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes an amazing point. He says that one of the forms of satanic deception is Shaytān's casting such thoughts in the mind of man that when he commits them, he renders that excellent system [of Allāh *taʿālā*] upside down. This is what we are witnessing today. Consequently, man becomes an affirmation of the condition which the following verse prohibits us from:

وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّتِيْ نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا.

Do not be like the woman who unravels to bits the thread which she has firmly spun.[1]

Just one person is enough to corrupt this system. And if several people join hands or a large group of people get together to do it, then the spread of corruption is a certainty. Shayṯān causes man to have doubts about genuine and correct beliefs. Sometimes he causes man to commit acts which sound-minded people will recoil from.

Nafs-e-ammārah

When the human temperament falls from its rank and drops to the level of bestiality, it is referred to as nafs-e-ammārah. Allāh *ta'ālā* says with reference to it:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[2]

Nafs-e-lawwāmah

If there isn't total bestiality in it nor total angelic qualities – rather, there is a bit of both – due to which some of man's actions are good while others are bad, then it is referred to as nafs-e-lawwāmah. Mention of it is made in the following verse:

لَا اُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا اُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ.

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[1] Sūrah an-Naẖl, 16: 92.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

I take an oath by the day of Resurrection. I take an oath by the self which reproaches at evil.[1]

People in this category are between angelic and bestial qualities. They are heading for the Hell-fire, and the only way to extricate themselves from it is for them to engage in striving and spiritual exercises or remain in the company of a Sufi master who will change their course. They can remove themselves in this way. If not, they will remain on that level for their entire lives.

Nafs-e-muṯma'innah

If the same self chooses to adhere to the Sharīʿat – abstains from rebellion and transgression – and develops the desire to follow the Sharīʿat, it is referred to as a nafs-e-muṯma'innah. Reference is made to it in the following verse:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً.

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Sustainer – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[2]

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* beseeched Allāh *taʿālā* for this type of self:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ نَفْسًا بِكَ مُطْمَئِنَّةً، تُؤْمِنُ بِلِقَآئِكَ، وَتَرْضٰى بِقَضَآئِكَ، وَتَقْنَعُ بِعَطَآئِكَ.

[1] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 1-2.

[2] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

O Allāh! I ask You for a self which is satisfied with You, has conviction in meeting You, remains happy with Your decree and is satisfied with Your gifts.

After explaining these three departments of man – the heart, the intellect and the temperament – Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says: "These are the details with regard to the elements of man."

Note: If these three elements are rectified, man will be embellished with effulgence and rectitude which is the objective of life. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Types of tribulations

To this point, we spoke about tribulations which are related to man's carnal self. Sometimes, a tribulation is experienced at the hands of a person's family. It is not personal but it is intrinsic to man; it cannot be separated from him. Yes, if the man himself is rectified, this domestic tribulation can be changed into rectitude. One tribulation with the family is when mutual relationships are spoilt. This could take place in a family, house or institution. Corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil* is another name for this.

The following statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to it. The essence of it is that Iblīs establishes his throne on water. The small devils who were sent to different parts of the world to delude man assemble around him. Each one relates his doings for that day. Iblīs does not give much worth to what they say until one devil comes forward and says: "I separated a certain man from his wife." Iblīs is overjoyed when he hears this, seats him close to him and says: "Congratulations! This was the real thing which you did."

This is just one small example of the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It includes all those issues which crop up between two people who are in the same place. For example, father and son, mother and daughter, brother and brother, friend and friend, teacher and student, mentor and disciple, master and slave, etc. Whatever corruption ensues between them because of not considering each others rights will be referred to as corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. If you were to ponder in the light of what was just said, you will find nothing but corruption in the entire world. There is probably not a single house in this world regarding which we can say that it has achieved rectitude as regards *tadbīr-e-manzil*.

Sometimes man is put through tribulations which are like waves of the ocean striking him one after another. What this means is that a general all-encompassing tribulation is experienced. An example of this is when unqualified and unsuitable people hanker after the caliphate. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to this when he says: "Shayṯān has lost hope in Muslims in the Arabian Peninsular worshipping him. However, he still has the hope of causing disharmony among them to the extent that one group fights against another." This tribulation is known as corruption of *tadbīr-e-madīnah*. This tribulation is also from Shayṯān. Those who are caught up in it do not even realize that they have become the instruments of Shayṯān whose objective is to turn the smooth running of the city upside down. I stated previously that the source of all three tribulations is the tribulation of man as regards his own self. If a person is put through a tribulation because of the evils of his self, there can be no doubt about several people in one place being put through a tribulation together.

The source of it is also the corruption of the carnal selves of all these who are living together. And if a very large number of such people assemble in a city or town, it too will be corrupted. And its source will also be the corruption of the carnal selves of these people.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then explains a fourth tribulation which he refers to as *fitnah millīyyah*. An example of this is when the genuine heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* depart from this world and unqualified people are put in charge of Dīnī and worldly matters. This could take the form of 'ulamā' and Sufis occupying themselves in intricate and delicate matters, while abstaining from explaining the simple and essential matters of Dīn. In this way, they fall into tribulation and cause the masses to also fall into it. The rulers and masses become lackadaisical in Dīn, and discard enjoining good and forbidding evil. Consequently, ignorance pervades everywhere and the era of ignorance (*jāhilīyyah*) returns. This is the era which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to.

The same theme is explained by Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* in an eloquent manner in his *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*:

أما بعد، فإن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر هو القطب الأعظم في الدين، وهو المهم الذي ابتعث الله له النبيين أجمعين. ولو طوى بساطه وأهمل علمه لتعطلت النبوة واضمحلت الديانة، وعمّت الفترة، وفشت الضلالة، وشاعت الجهالة، استسرى الفساد، واتسع الخرق،

وخربت البلاد، وهلك العباد. وإن لم يشعروا بالهلاك إلا يوم التناد، وقد كان الذي خفنا أن يكون. إنا لله وإنا أليه راجعون.[١]

The position of enjoining good and forbidding evil is that of the greatest pivot in Islam. It is the important responsibility for which all the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām were commissioned. If it is shelved aside and its practice is abandoned, prophet-hood will become useless and religiosity will wane. Laziness will become common, misguidance will spread, ignorance will proliferate, corruption will permeate, unlawfulness will spread, the lands will become desolate and the populace will be destroyed. Even if they do not perceive and realize their destruction before the day of Resurrection. The thing which we fear will certainly take place. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

إذ قد اندرس من هذا القطب علمه وعمله وانمحى بالكلية حقيقته ورسمه واستولت على القلوب مداهنة الخلق وانمحت عنها مراقبة الخالق واسترسل الناس في اتباع الهوى الشهوات استرسال البهائم، وعز على بساط الأرض مؤمن صادق لاتخاذه في الله لومة لائم، فمن سعى في تلافي هذه الفترة وسد هذه الثلمة إما متكفلا بعملها أو متقلدا لتنفيذها مجددا لهذه السنة الداثرة ناهضا بأعبائها متشمرا في إحيائها كان مستأثرا من بين الخلق بإحياء سنة أفضى الزمان إلى إماتتها.[٢]

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٢، ص ٣٠٧.

[2] إحياء العلوم: ج٢، ص ٣٠٧.

It is observed that not only practice on this pivot but even knowledge of it has been wiped out, and its reality and custom has been completely obliterated. The hearts are now controlled by flattery towards the creation while consciousness of the Creator has vanished. People are so free in following their desires and passions that they are behaving like encaged animals which have just been set free. The existence of a genuine believer who can bear the criticism of critics for Allāh's sake has become a rarity on the entire surface of the earth. The person who will mend this crack and seal this gap either by practising on it or taking hold of the reins to ensure others do it will be a reviver of this buried Sunnat. This is because he has taken up the task for its revival and bore the weight of reviving this Sunnat on his shoulders. He has been chosen among the entire creation for the revival of this Sunnat while the entire world is bent on putting an end to it.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then makes mention of other tribulations. One of them is known as *fitnah mustatīrah* in which people leave the bounds and demands of humanity. Ascetics and worshippers come out completely from the demands of their temperament. In other words, because they cannot rectify it they find it easier to discard it and adopt monasticism, yogic practices and so on. The masses turn fully towards bestiality and become complete animals. In fact, they start doing things which even animals do not do. The following verse applies to them:

اُولٰئِكَ كَالْاَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ.

They are like animals. In fact, they are more astray.

Then there those who are in-between. They could also be referred to as two-faced.

If they did not pay attention in this direction, they will remain in that category for the rest of their lives. If they realize their defectiveness and engage in spiritual striving or remain in the company of a qualified shaykh, and turn in the correct direction, they can extricate themselves from that tribulation.

Note: This is a beautiful explanation of the *fitnah mustaṯīrah* which deserves to be embedded in our hearts. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from such a tribulation. Āmīn. (compiler)

Ḫaḏrat Shāh Ṣāḫib *raḫimahullāh* mentions another tribulation which he refers to as *fitnah al-waqāʾiʿ al-jauwwīyyah*. This was explained at the beginning when we spoke of heavenly calamities such as floods, plagues and so on.

Ḫaḏrat Shāh Ṣāḫib *raḫimahullāh* said:

فتنة الرجل في نفسه تموج كموج البحر

A person is inundated with tribulations with regard to his self. They pound on him one after the other like waves.

This can be understood more clearly from the following:

الحكمة العلمية على ثلاثة أقسام لأنها إما علم بمصالح شخص معين بانفراده ليتحلى بالفضائل ويتخلى من الرذائل ويسمى تهذيب الأخلاق.

Academic wisdom is of three types. It could be knowledge related to each person as a separate entity

so that he may embellish himself with virtues and divest himself of reprehensible qualities. This is known as tahdhīb al-akhlāq (the culturing of character)

This is the treatment for the tribulation which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* referred to as a tribulation which a person experiences with regard to his self. Since it is obligatory on each person to have knowledge of whatever is to his benefit, the culturing of character becomes obligatory on every person.

وإما علم بمصالح جماعة مشتركة في المنزل كالوالد والمولود والمالك والمملوك (والزوج والزوجة والتلميذ والأستاذ والشيخ والمريد) ويسمى تدبير المنزل.

The other is knowledge related to the wellbeing of people living together. For example, a father and his children, a master and his slave, a husband and his wife, a student and his teacher, a shaykh and his disciple. This branch of knowledge is known as tadbīr al-manzil.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* refers to it as the tribulation which a man experiences as regards his family.

وإما بعلم بمصالح جماعة مشتركة في المدينة ويسمى السياسة المدنية.

The third is knowledge related to the collective wellbeing of residents of a city or country. This is known as siyāsah madanīyyah.

This is the treatment for the tribulations regarding which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that they pound on man one after the other like waves. Practical wisdom demands not to confine one's self to

mere knowledge of these matters but to focus on their results, viz. to embellish one's self with virtues and empty one's self of evils. This is what is known as *tahdhīb al-akhlāq* – the culturing of character.

After explaining all the types of wisdom, the same people write:

أعرض عن أقسام الحكمة العملية بأسرها لأن الشريعة المصطفوية قد قضت الوتر على أكمل وجه وأتم تفصيل.

Philosophers turned away completely from the types of practical wisdom because the Sharīʿat of Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam explained it to the point of perfection, leaving people incapable of explaining it in such a manner.

Types of practical wisdom

The author of *Ghiyāth al-Lughāt* also defines practical wisdom as perfect knowledge of livelihood and the Hereafter. He explains its three categories, viz. *tahdhīb al-akhlāq, tadbīr al-manzil* and *siyāsah madanīyyah.*

From the acknowledgements or admissions of the philosophers, this point is further established and proven that Islam is a complete and perfect system of life. It contains principles and injunctions related to all three departments, viz. *tahdhīb al-akhlāq, tadbīr al-manzil* and *siyāsah madanīyyah.* There is no problem or dilemma in man's individual or collective life for which there is no solution in the Qur'ān or the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Unfortunately, there is no interest in Dīn. This is why people succumb to their carnal and personal desires.

Take the case of caliphate. The ruling of the Sharīʿat is that a qualified person must occupy this position and that an unqualified person must not vie for it. A caliph has to possess the quality of justice at the very beginning. However, if he does not continue on this quality of justice, and becomes a flagrant sinner instead, then there are certain details in this regard which we will explain later on.

Now just think for yourself. The caliphate is such an important and significant issue in Islam. How can Islam which is a perfect system not have rules and regulations for it? At the same time, H̲ad̲rat Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* says with reference to it: "Tribulations which pound on man one after the other like waves." This is because its fire is ignited in the entire city or country and every person becomes involved in it. Shayt̲ān finds an opportunity to spur man's carnal and bestial desires and causes people to fight against each other. This is why we find the appointment of a particular person as a caliph being against the temperament of many people. It is also in line with the temperament of many others. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* corrected and rectified these conflicting human emotions which normally burst forth on occasions of this nature. The following H̲adīth of H̲ad̲rat ʿUbādah ibn S̲āmit *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* is quoted in *S̲ah̲īh̲ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan*:

عن جنادة بن أبي أمية قال دخلنا على عبادة بن الصامت وهو مريض، فقلنا أصلحك الله حدث بحديث ينفعك الله به. قال سمعته من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال دعانا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فبايعناه، فقال فيما أخذ علينا أن بايعنا على السمع والطاعة في منشطنا

ومكرهنا وعسرنا ويسرنا وأثرة علينا وأن لا تنازع الأمر أهله إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم من الله فيه برهان.[1]

Hadrat Junādah ibn Abī Umayyah relates: We went to visit Hadrat ʿUbādah ibn as-Sāmit radiyallāhu ʿanhu when he was ill. We said to him: May Allāh taʿālā bless you with good health. Relate a Hadīth through which Allāh taʿālā will benefit you (and all of us as well) and which you heard from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He said: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam called us and we pledged allegiance to him. In the allegiance he took a promise from us that we will hear and obey when we are happy about a matter or not, whether it is difficult or easy, and even if preference is given to others over us. Further, he said: You must not dispute with the rulers unless you see a clear blasphemy for which you have a proof from Allāh taʿālā.

This Hadīth clearly states that at the time of bayʿat Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to us that if someone else is given preference over us as regards a particular position, we will not be offended. Furthermore, we will not dispute in matters related to leadership with those who are qualified for it. The author of *Fath al-Bārī* states that the words "even if preference is given to others over us" mean: We will obey the one who has been appointed as a ruler over us. We will not wait for the fulfilment of our rights in our obedience to him. In fact, we will obey him even if he does not fulfil our rights.

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[1] متفق عليه، ولفظه للبخاري، كتاب الفتن.

This is the meaning of the Hadīth which is related by Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أتاني جبرئيل فقال إن أمتك مفتنة من بعدك فقلت من أين، قال من قبل أمرائهم وقرائهم يمنع الأمراء الناس الحقوق فيطلبون حقوقهم فيفتنون ويتبع القراء هؤلاء الأمراء فيفتنون، قلت فكيف يسلم من سلم منهم، قال بالكف الصبر ان أعطوا الذي لهم أخذوه وإن منعوه تركوه.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām came to me and said: "Your ummat will be put through tribulations after you." I asked: "From where will the tribulation come?" He said: "From their leaders and scholars. The leaders will deprive the masses of their rights. The masses will demand them and be put through a tribulation in this way. The scholars will follow the rulers and they will be put through a tribulation." I asked: "How can a person save himself from this?" He replied: "By abstaining from demanding his rights and exercising patience. If the leaders give them their dues, they must accept them [their dues]. If they refuse, they must leave them and must not demand them."

This was also the practice of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. They would first differentiate between who was qualified and who was not. The situation was not like how it is today where the learned and the ignorant, the wealthy and the poor, man and woman have all become equals.

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[1] فتح الباري: ج ١٣، ص ٤.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* adhered to the following teaching of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا.

People will continue experiencing goodness as long as they maintain the differences in their ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.[1]

I say, an Arab poet had also understood this mystery regarding which even the intelligentsia of today are heedless. He said:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

The condition of the masses can never be in order if they have no one ruling over them. If an ignorant person is made ruler over them, they have no ruler in reality.

The reason why I am saying this is that the criterion for progress today is for every person to become a ruler. We have to convince them that their condition is not good and they are in fact in tribulation. It is very hard to convince them to believe this.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were not like this. Instead, they used to differentiate between the qualified and the unqualified, the jurist and the non-jurist. In fact, a less qualified person will refrain from explaining rules and regulations in the presence of his seniors. He would do this out of respect for the senior.

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[1] Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān ʿUthmānī: *Ishāʿat-e-Islām.*

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates:

أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال استقرؤا القرآن من أربعة من عبد الله بن مسعود وسالم مولى أبي حذيفة وأبي بن كعب ومعاذ بن جبل.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Learn the Qur'ān from four people: ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Sālim Maulā Hudhayfah, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb and Muʿādh ibn Jabal.

The same Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to say as a way of expressing gratitude for Allāh's favours: "The Sahābah used to think that I know a lot about Allāh's Book. On the other hand, if I learnt of a person who knows more than me, I would undertake a journey to meet him." The Sahābī heard this statement and did not refute it.

It is stated in *Sahīh Bukhārī* and other books that Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a muftī. The scholars of Hijāz, Syria and Iraq concurred on this. They used to revert to him when they faced problems. A certain Sahābī said with reference to him: "As long as this distinguished scholar is in your midst, do not come and ask rules and regulations from me."

In the same way, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* enjoyed a distinguished position among the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* in the science of jurisprudence and Qur'ānic exegesis. Hadrat Layth ibn Abī Sulaym *rahimahullāh* said to Hadrat Tā'ūs *rahimahullāh*: "I see you always in the company of this youngster (Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*) but not in the company of

the other Companions of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam!?” H̲ad̲rat T̲āʼūs rah̲imahullāh replied: “What can I say! I saw 70 senior Companions of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam consulting and accepting the view of H̲ad̲rat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu whenever they differed on any issue.”

H̲ad̲rat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿĀs̲ rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu and H̲ad̲rat ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu were also from among the jurists.

These were the teachings of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and this is how the S̲ah̲ābah rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum practised on them. Unfortunately, the situation today is that let alone practising on them, people do not even have knowledge of them. In fact, we will not be wrong if we said that the exact opposite is being practised today. There is no sign of listening and obeying, nor is there any sign of abstaining from disputes. Listening and obeying is a branch of leadership, and here we have no leader. Therefore everyone is a chief today. This is why if someone is considered to be suitable for a position and given it, others are offended. Making objections to leadership has become the purpose of our lives. The conditions around us are testimony to this.

Today it is not only a matter of two individuals disputing for leadership, this is bad in itself. Rather, what we see today is that when one person is qualified for a certain position, another unqualified person stands up to compete against him. This results in heated disputes and fights. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: “Do not dispute in matters of the caliphate,

إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم من الله فيه برهان.

unless you see a clear act of unbelief for which you have proof from Allāh ta'ālā.

In other words, you must have an explicit text or authentic tradition which is not open to discussion. What this means, it is not permissible to rebel against the caliph as long as his action can be explained and rationalized.

When is rejection permitted?

'Allāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* says that the word "kufr" in the above Hadīth refers to a sin. The Hadīth will mean: Do not dispute with the rulers unless you see them committing an act which is clearly against the rules of Islam. In such a case, you can reject.

Other scholars say that the word "kufr" literally refers to kufr. Therefore, it will not be permissible to object to the ruler unless he commits an open act of kufr.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* says that the view of "kufr" will apply when the dispute is with regard to the leadership itself. This would mean, do not dispute with him by finding fault with his leadership unless he commits an act of kufr. As for "sinning", this will apply when the dispute is to do with something other than the leadership itself. What this means is that sinning does not damage the leadership. Therefore, instead of disputing the leader's leadership, objections may be made against his sinning. He should be apprized of it in a soft and lenient manner. Instead of resorting to harshness, a simple approach should be adopted. This will only apply if the person has the power to do it.

Ibn Tīn relates from Dā’ūdī that the scholars in general concur that if tyrant rulers can be removed without any tribulation and oppression, then it is obligatory to remove them. If not, the people will have to exercise patience. Some scholars say that an unjust person cannot be appointed as a ruler in the first place. If a just person becomes a ruler and becomes unjust after that, the scholars differ on the issue of rebelling against him. The correct view is that it is not permissible to rebel against him unless he commits kufr. ‘Allāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* says that the scholars state the reason for not removing such a ruler and not rebelling against him is the inevitable tribulations, bloodshed and mutual fights which would ensue. There will be more harm in removing him than in leaving him in place. This is why it is not permissible to rebel against him.

These are the explanations of the Hadīth experts. I now present the texts of the jurists. From them we will learn when the imām and caliph can be removed, and when he cannot. The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

يكره تقليد الفاسق ويعزل به إلا لفتنة قال الشامي المراد أنه يستحق العزل ولذا لم يقل ينعزل.

It is detestable to appoint a flagrant sinner as a ruler. He will be removed on account of his sinning unless it is going to cause some tribulation. Shāmī said: This means that he deserves to be removed. This is why the author did not say that he is automatically removed.

وفي شرح المقاصد وأما خلعه بنفسه بلا سبب ففيه خلاف وكذا في انعزاله بالفسق والأكثرون على أنه لا ينعزل وهو المختار من مذهب الشافعي وأبي حنيفة وعن محمد روايتان ويستحق العزل بالاتفاق.

Sharh al-Maqāsid states: There are differences of opinion as regard the leader removing himself. The same can be said about his automatic removal on account of sinning. The majority of scholars say that he is not automatically removed. This is the preferred view of Imām Shāfiʿī rahimahullāh and Imām Abū Hanīfah rahimahullāh. There are two narrations from Imām Muhammad rahimahullāh. Apart from this, they all concur that he deserves to be removed.

وقال في المسايرة إذا قلد عدلا ثم جار وفسق لا ينعزل ولكن يستحق العزل إن لم يستلزم فتنة.

It is stated in al-Musāyarah: If a just person is made a ruler and he then becomes unjust and a flagrant sinner, he will not be automatically removed. Rather, he will deserve to be removed provided his removal is not going to cause any tribulation.

وفي المواقف ان للأمة خلع الإمام وعزله بسبب يوجب مثل أن يوجد منه ما يوجب اختلال المسلمين وانتكاس أمور الدين كما كان لهم نصبه وإقامته لانتظامها وعلائها وإن أدى خلعه إلى فتنة احتمل أدنى المضرتين.

The following is stated in al-Mawāqif: The community has the right to remove its leader in the presence of a reason which necessitates his removal. For example, he has a quality which caused division among the

Muslims, or matters of religion are rendered upside down. [They have the right to remove him] just as they have the right to appoint him for the upholding of the sultanate. If his removal is going to cause tribulations, then the lesser of the two evils will have to be chosen.

WELLBEING

Related to the previous chapter on tribulations, we present an article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on the subject of wellbeing. If only Muslims would study it so that they are saved from tribulations and enjoy wellbeing. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم.

I am going to speak about an essential topic today. Listen carefully.

We learn from the Ahādīth that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from tribulations and temptations. He said:

نعوذ بالله من عذاب النار ونعوذ بالله من الفتن ما ظهر منها وما بطن.

We seek refuge in Allāh from the punishment of the Hell-fire. We seek refuge in Allāh from tribulations which are apparent and those which are hidden.

Since this is mentioned in the Hadīth, we will have to understand what tribulations are, and also which are apparent and which are hidden. I would like to say something in this regard even though I know that this is not the era in which people speak about these things nor do they want to hear them. Nonetheless, our ʿulamā' and Sufis delved into this topic and wrote details about it in their books. Thus, we too will speak about it irrespective of whether anyone pays heed or not. At the same time, there may be some servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who derives benefit from it.

The Hadīth which I quoted above is narrated by Abū ʿUwānah in *Hisn Hasīn*. The commentator writes:

نعوذ بالله من الفتن أي الدنيوية والأخروية ما ظهر وما بطن، أي ما يتعلق بالأمر الظاهر والباطن، أو ما ظهر الآن وما سيظهر في مستقبل الزمان.

The word tribulations refers to those of this world and the Hereafter. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from them all. The apparent tribulations refer to those which are related to obvious and apparent things, while the hidden tribulations refer to those which are related to the inner self. Another meaning could be that apparent tribulations refer to those which are present, and the hidden ones refer to those which are yet to come. In this way, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from present and future tribulations.

We learn from the Ah̲ādīth that there are many types of tribulations. They are so severe that death has been given preference over them. The following is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Bih̲ār*:

الموت خير من الفتنة. الفتنة تكون من الله ومن الخلق. وتكون في الدين والدنيا كالارتداد والمعاصي والبلية والمعصية والقتل والعذاب وإليه أشار بحديث وإذا أردت فتنة في قوم فتوفني.[1]

Death is better than a tribulation. A tribulation is sometimes from Allāh taʿālā and sometimes from the creation. In the same way, it could be in Dīnī matters and worldly matters. For example, apostasy, sins, a calamity, killing, punishment, etc. A H̲adīth makes

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[1] مجمع البحار: ج ٣، ص ٨٥.

reference to this wherein Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When You intend putting a nation into a tribulation, cause me to die before that.

Man is also put through tribulations with regard to his self, family, wealth, children, house, neighbour, life, death, poverty and affluence.

The following is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Bihār*:

فتنة الرجل في أهله هو أن يأتي لهم بما لا يحل من القول والفعل وما يعرض لهن معهن سوء أو حزن أو غيرهما. وفي ماله بأن يأخذ من غير حق ويصرف في غير مصرفه. وفي ولده لفرط المحبة والشغل به عن كثير نم الخيرات. وفي جاره بأن يتمنى مثل حاله وزواله عنه.

The tribulation of a man as regards his family is when he says or does something which is impermissible, or when he experiences evil or grief from them. His tribulation in his wealth is when he earns and acquires it in unlawful ways, and spends it in the wrong places. His tribulation in his children is when he goes beyond the limits in his love for them, and when they preoccupy him from many good actions. His tribulation as regards his neighbour is when the latter desires his good conditions and for their removal from him. (This is known as jealousy. Allāh taʿālā makes reference to this: "I seek refuge in You from the evil of the envious one when he envies me.")

فتنة المحيا ما يعرض في حيوته من الابتلاء بالدنيا والشهوات الجهالات أو الابتلاء مع عدم الصبر والوقوع في الآفات والإصرار على الفساد.

Another tribulation is that of life when man is faced with many worldly calamities, desires, ignorance. Or, he falls into such a tribulation for which he loses all patience. The same can be said of falling into miseries and persisting on corruption.

وفتنة الممات ما يفتتن عند الموت في أمر الخاتمة، نعوذ بالله، أو فتنة القبر المترتب عليه، أو سوال منكر ونكير مع الحيرة وعذاب القبر والأهوال.

The tribulation of death refers to those matters related to a person's final moments when Shayṯān makes it difficult for him to have a good end. We seek refuge in Allāh. It could refer to the tribulation of the grave which follows immediately after death. Or it could refer to the questioning by Munkar and Nakīr when man is confused. It could also refer to punishment of the grave and other terrors in it.

Confusion at the time of questioning will be experienced by an unbeliever. A believer will be able to answer without hesitation because he had learnt his lessons in this world and revised them. He memorized those lessons while the unbeliever was heedless of them. This is why he will say, as stated in a Hadīth:

هاه هاه لا أدري.[1]

I do not know! I do not know!

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[1] مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ٢٦.

وفتنة الصدر ما ينطوي عليه من الحقد والحسد والعقائد الباطلة وما يعرض فيه من الشكوك والشبهة والوساوس.

A man's tribulation in his self and within him refer to the malice, jealousy, false beliefs, doubts, misgivings and whisperings which he experiences.

وشر فتنة الغنى كالطغيان والبطر وعدم أداء الزكوة وزاد لفظ الشر هنا تصريحا به أو تغليظا على الإغتناء حتى لا يغتروا.[1]

Affluence is also a tribulation. Man becomes rebellious and haughty because of it, and he refuses to pay zakāh. The word "evil" is added to the tribulation of wealth to make a direct reference to it, or to demonstrate its severity so that wealthy people do not become conceited.

Like the author of *Majmaʿ al-Bihār*, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* lists three types of tribulations in his magnum opus, *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah.*

Three distinct tribulations

١. فتنة الرجل في نفسه.

٢. فتنة الرجل في أهله.

٣. فتنة تموج كموج البحر.

The tribulation of a man as regards his self. This was referred to as his tribulation in his chest. In other

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[1] مجمع البحار: ٥٧.

words, man's heart becomes corrupt. When the heart becomes corrupt, the rest of the body will obviously follow suite. A Hadīth states:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله،ألا وهي القلب.[1]

There is a piece of flesh in the body. If it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is corrupt, the entire body will be corrupt. Listen! It is the heart.

Man's connection is with the creation and the Creator. When his carnal self succumbs to tribulation, his heart becomes spoilt and his connection with both [the creation and the Creator] becomes spoilt. In other words, false beliefs develop in his heart, and he also develops malice, jealousy and mercilessness towards the creation. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to this spoilt relationship in the following way:

فتنة الرجل في نفسه بأن يقسو قلبه فلا يجد حلاوة الطاعة ولا لذة المناجات.

Man's tribulation with regard to his self is when his heart becomes hard. Thus, he neither experiences the sweetness of obedience nor the joy of private conversation [with Allāh taʿālā].

The hard-heartedness is the effect of his relationship with the Creator. When he becomes hard-hearted, it also has an effect on his relationships with the creation. He starts to wrong and oppress them,

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[1] البخاري، كتاب الإيمان.

kindness and mercy are removed from his heart. Based on this, he becomes extremely callous towards his fellow humans and treats them in a manner which even animals do not treat each other. In other words, an animal may feel mercy but not this person. Whereas mercy is a praiseworthy quality which is a requirement of the Sharīʿat and is liked by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A Hadīth states:

إرحموا من في الأرض يرحمكم من في السماء.[1]

Show mercy to those on earth and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you.

The second tribulation which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to is of a person with his family. This refers to the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It is stated in a Hadīth that Iblīs establishes his throne on water. The small devils who were sent to different parts of the world to delude man assemble around him. Each one relates his doings for that day. Iblīs does not give much worth to what they say until one devil comes forward and says: "I separated a certain man from his wife." Iblīs is overjoyed when he hears this, seats him close to him and says: "Congratulations! This was the real thing which you did."

This is just one small example of the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It includes all those issues which crop up between two people who are physically in the same place but very distant from each other. There is mutual enmity and ill-feeling towards each other. For

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الألباس: ج ١، ص ٩٧.

example, the father has a complaint against his son and vice versa. The same can be said of mother and daughter, brother and brother, friend and friend, teacher and student, mentor and disciple, master and slave, etc. If this is going to be the situation in any place, there can be no doubt about the corruptness of that place.

Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* complains about the people of his time and says that evil character has corrupted every household in such a way that no two persons have a heart for each other. He says:

> What is this noise and clamour which I am observing!? I see tribulation and evil filling the entire world.
>
> Every person wants each day to be better than the previous one, but the difficulty is that I see each coming day to be worse than the previous one.
>
> Daughters are at loggerheads with their mothers, and sons have evil designs against their fathers.
>
> There is no mercy between brother and brother. In the same way, the father has no mercy for his son.
>
> I see the Arab horse getting injured beneath its saddle while I see a gold necklace around the neck of an ass.
>
> Foolish, stupid and senseless people are throwing around sherbet of rose and sugar candy, while the intelligent and perceptive ones are being made to drink blood.

> O friends! Listen attentively to this piece of advice of Hāfiz. Do good deeds and remember well that I believe these words of advice to be more valuable than pearls and properties.

Look at the accurate picture which Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* paints of the tribulation which a man has to suffer with regard to his family. It is undoubtedly an accurate portrayal of the corruption of the family which develops because of our evil social dealings and interactions. If a house has a righteous environment, then even if a man comes home worried and stressed out, he will experience peace and tranquillity from the noble character of his house-people. But if the house is also corrupt, where can the man flee to?

Society has become evil and corruption is common in every home because the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* have been abandoned. A major blame of this can be placed on the women. They become the causes of the corruption in the home, and it starts from them. The man then falls in their trap. Sometimes the situation becomes so awful that they have to separate hearth and home. I know the conditions of some people. They are so distressed that they might find a little peace in their shops and offices, but their homes have become a hell for them, so they do not even want to step inside. They may find some solace by meeting their friends, but their close ones have become like scorpions to them.

I call this a worldly torment. When people corrupt their homes, they will turn them into a hell. Subsequently, when the same people go to work in an institution, office or government, they will carry the evil character with them. As a result, the

darkness which they carried with them will now pervade these places. I see this condition in the whole world. Those whose character has become corrupt are now looked up as teachers of sound character. All the intelligentsia of today are observing this but no one can say anything.

Tribulations like waves of an ocean

The third tribulation which H̲ad̲rat Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* makes reference to is the one which strikes one after the other like waves of an ocean. In other words, it has extensive borders causing the entire world to be pounded. He explains this further by saying:

هي فساد تدبير المدينة وطمع الناس في الخلافة من غير حق وهو قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الشيطان قد يئس أن يعبده المصلون ولكن في التحريش بينهم.[1]

Tribulations which strike like the waves of the ocean refer to the corruption of city and country. Unqualified people hanker after the caliphate. People then fight against each other as though they are animals. A H̲adīth of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to this when he said that Shayt̲ān has given up hope in the believers of the Arabian Peninsular worshipping him. However, he can still exercise his control over them by prompting them to fight against each other.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٢، ص ٣٥٦.

The tribulation of the self

I say, the people must have been caught up in tribulations for the ʿulamā' to have paid special attention in explaining them. They did this so that people of every era may save themselves. Today too if we observe the people, we will find them caught up in these tribulations. What I mean, a man is experiencing tribulations as regards his self, his family, and those which are pounding like the waves of the ocean. Although these appear to be three different types, their origin is one, viz. the tribulation of man within his self. Man's character becomes spoilt and he succumbs to evil character. When several people of this nature live under one roof, the peace and comfort of the house disappear. When this situation prevails in many homes, the entire city and then the country becomes a bedrock of tribulation and corruption; and peace and security no longer remain. Thus, we see that the tribulation of the self is the source of all tribulations. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prayed for sound character.

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَحْسَنْتَ خَلْقِيْ فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقِيْ وَأَذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قَلْبِيْ وَأَجِرْنِيْ مِنْ مُضِلَّاتِ الْفِتَنِ مَا أَحْيَيْتَنَا.[1]

O Allāh! You beautified my physical body so beautify my character as well. Remove the anger of my heart and save me from misleading tribulations for as long You permit us to live.

The reason for this duʿā' is that when man's character is sound, he will be automatically saved

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[1] مجمع الزوائد: ج ٨، ص ١٢.

from tribulations and so will others. After all, it is because of unsound character that there is tribulation and corruption in the world. General peace ceases to exist and safety becomes scarce. Despite all this, those who are stupid and foolish – as made clear in the couplets of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* - the worst of tribulations do not serve as admonitions to them. In fact, they rejoice over conditions of this nature and make them the means for the realization of their objectives.

On the other hand, the person who has the slightest personal perception and concern for the ummat has to endure "drinking blood" because soundness has disappeared from the world. To make matters worse, a person's time goes out of his control and so does his heart. What a shocking thing when our own heart is not under our control! We want to worship Allāh *taʿālā* with devotion, perform salāh, read the Qur'ān, engage in Allāh's remembrance; but because tranquillity of the heart is missing we cannot do all this. When there is a profusion of tribulations, everyone is affected – the seniors and juniors, men and women, the masses and the elite. They are so affected by them that they cannot save themselves even if they want to. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

لأرى الفتن تقع خلال بيوتكم مواقع القطر وروى المطر أي في الكثرة والشيوع وعدم التخصيص بطائفة.[1]

I see tribulations falling in your houses like rain when it falls in abundance and no place is left dry.

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[1] مجمع البحار: ج ٤، ص ١٠١.

Tribulations will be all-pervading in the same way and no group will be excluded.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* predicted the inundation of tribulations like rain water which gets everywhere, even in homes. In other words, their abundance will affect everyone, no group will be excluded. Although the scholars took this to mean the battles which were fought among the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and Tābiʿīn, etc. tribulations are not peculiar to them. Rather, they refer to them and others which will descend periodically until the day of Resurrection.

The meaning of tribulations

I said the above because another Hadīth contains the words:

هناك الزلازل والفتن.

That is when earthquakes and tribulations occur.

The author of *Majmaʿ* explains this as follows:

إشارة إلى وقعة الجمل وصفين وظهور الخوارج في أرض نجد والعراق، وكذا خروج الدجال ويأجوج.

The word "tribulations" refers to the Battle of Jamal, Siffīn and the appearance of the Khawārij in Najd and Iraq. It also refers to the appearance of Dajjāl and Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj at the approach of the Resurrection.

No matter what, we learn from the Traditions that tribulations always took place and will continue until the day of Resurrection. The literal meaning of *fitnah* (tribulation) is "a test". It then started to be used to refer to an evil which was a means of a test or trial. Its usage was expanded further until it came to mean

evils in general. For example, sinning, killing, unbelief, etc. This is why a Hadīth states:

A believer is naturally created in tribulation

المؤمن خلق مفتنا أي ممتحنا يمتحنه الله بالذنب ثم يتوب ثم يعود ثم يتوب.[١]

A man is naturally created in tribulation. That is, he is put through tests by Allāh taʿālā through sinning. He repents, then returns to sinning, and repents again.

He is saved sometimes and put through tests at other times. However, when he commits a sin, he repents. If he sins again, he repents again. This is the tribulation with regard to his Dīn.

Man is sometimes put through such a severe tribulation that he sees no way of coming out of it. It is known as *fitnah ʿumyā'*. It is explained in *Majmaʿ al-Bihār* as follows:

فتنة عمياء صماء أي لا ترى منها مخرجا أو المراد بها صاحبها أي يقع فيها على غير بصيرة فيعمون فيها ويصمون عن تأمل الحق استماع النصح بل يحاربون عن الجهل والعداوة.[٢]

One tribulation is blind and deaf. In other words, you cannot see any escape from it. Alternatively, it could refer to the person himself being blind and deaf to it. In other words, he falls into it without insight. Because he is blind to it, he cannot recognize the truth. And

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[1] مجمع البحار: ٥٦.

[2] مجمع البحار: ٥٨.

because he is deaf to it, he does not lend an ear to any well-wisher. Instead, he fights out of ignorance and enmity.

Look! The author of *Majmaʿ al-Bihār* has explained *fitnah ʿumyā'* as: A person falling headlong into a tribulation with his eyes and ears shut. He is neither prepared to ponder over what is right and wrong, nor to listen to the good counsel of a well-wisher. His opposition is based solely on enmity and ignorance.

When tribulations of this nature become common, peace will cease to exist in this world. Whereas peace is demanded in the Sharīʿat. It is therefore necessary to obtain the means for peace. Tribulation is the exact opposite of it. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَدُنْيَايَ وَاَهْلِيْ وَمَالِيْ[1]

O Allāh! I ask You pardon and peace in my Dīn, worldly life, family and wealth.

Peace is undoubtedly a great bounty. It is only valued when there is no peace. This is the principle with bounties; they are only appreciated when they are withdrawn. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made many duʿā's for peace, and begged for it in everything.

This world is certainly a place of tribulation. Man is therefore put through tribulations at some time or the other. No person enjoys every type of peace all the time. This is because real peace and comfort will be in Paradise only. No comfort of this world is devoid of some type of pain and grief.

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[1] مشکوۃ شریف: ۲۰۲.

Since Paradise is the place for total peace and comfort, in this world also only that person will enjoy peace who is occupied with works of the Hereafter and is concerned about establishing a genuine link with Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, he discards all futilities and frees himself for the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. Any speech apart from the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* increases hard-heartedness.

A Hadīth states:

أن عيسى بن مريم كان يقول لا تكثروا الكلام بغير ذكر الله فتقسوا قلوبكم. فإن القلب القاسي بعيد من الله ولكن لا تعلمون.

Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām used to say: Do not engage in too much of speech except for Allāh's remembrance or else your hearts will become hard. A hard heart is very far from Allāh taʿālā but because this distance is a metaphysical distance, you do not perceive it.

May Allāh *taʿālā* save us from hard-heartedness because when it develops, the heart does not accept any other influence. His hard-heartedness inevitably leads to foolishness and stupidity.

We learn the treatment for it from the above statement of Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. That is, the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh's remembrance does not cause hard-heartedness. If a person's heart does become hard, it is removed through Allāh's remembrance. When hardships and difficulties do not affect a heart, the person must conclude that his heart is not in good shape. He will have to focus his attention on it. Anyway, a believer has to be forever focussed on Allāh *taʿālā*. This is the ruling of the Sharīʿat.

DIVINE BENEVOLENCE

Yesterday I explained to you that even an infant knows the path. It cries so that its affectionate mother may come to it and breastfeed it. Allāh *taʿālā* is much more affectionate than a mother; He is waiting for you to cry to Him. The work can only be done when the correct way is followed. People do not want to do the work but want to achieve success. Various works are done in this world but the strange thing is that people want only our work to go to waste. Those who come here are skilled in their respective jobs, but when we say something to them, they start acknowledging their foolishness and dim-wittedness. They are not really foolish; they do not want to do the work. I speak about these things so that I could show the path to the people. However, it will only open to the one for whom Allāh *taʿālā* opens it. On whom does He open it? He told us that as well – on the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* A poet says:

> No person can traverse the path of the absolute truth unless he has Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as his guide.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* open the path to us through the sanctity of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Āmīn. (compiler)

Something has to be done to acquire rectitude

Listen! There are various levels of rectitude. One level is when a person performs s̲alāh and keeps fast. However, he has not acquired that level of rectitude which is enjoyed by the saints. This is what I want to explain to you. They were something and we are something else. I do not want to denigrate you. A

saint addressed a gathering and said: “These are all people of Paradise.” But he added: “Only certain ones are humans.” Now that I am living among you how can I denigrate you? If I do not address you in this way and do not teach you how to understand, what more can I do? People come here and want to become saints without having to do anything. I say, even if you adopt the appearance of saints out of ostentation, do you think you will be saints in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*?

The seat of the saints cannot be occupied through mere boasting. If you want to occupy their place, you will have to obtain their means, viz. do as they did. If people are going to merely imitate the saints, do you think they will become saints? Certainly not.

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said:

> Man does something and a monkey does
> the same because it mimics the man.

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* gives an example. He was an expert in advising and imparting words of wisdom through stories. He writes: A monkey used to live in a tree opposite a barbershop. Sometimes the barber had to leave his shop for some need or the other. When he would come back, he would find the scissors missing. Sometimes the shaving blade could not be found. Sometimes the mirror would have disappeared. One day he noticed his items on the tree with the monkey. He concluded that the monkey was the culprit who had been taking away his tools. He stood outside, did as though he was passing the blade across his lips and cheeks, left the blade there and went inside his shop. As was its habit, the monkey came down, grabbed the blade and fled to the tree. It then passed the blade across its lips and cheeks. It cut its lips and cheeks in the process.

When it realized this, it threw the blade and other tools. The barber never missed any of his tools after that day.

From this story Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* wants us to realize that a person has to have some intelligence even if he wants to imitate another. If a foolish person imitates another, he will cause harm to none but his own self. A person imitates the saints and assumes he has become like them, whereas there is a world of difference between the two.

When I address someone sternly on some occasions, I do it because people come here for this reason. That is, they desire rectification and reformation. This is why I address them harshly, and that too in the course of my lecture so that others who have misunderstood may have their misunderstanding removed. On the other hand, my written word is soft and lenient because the same (removal of misunderstandings) cannot be achieved through writing. This is why I say to you, no one should ever go from here and imitate me. I do not permit anyone to do this.

Listen! I want to put to work those who come here, this is why I have to speak harshly sometimes. How can I cause hatred in the hearts of those who come to me for rectification!? This is extremely reprehensible in Islam. Some people came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained about a certain Sahābī. They said: "We work the entire day and return tired, and the one who leads us in salāh reads lengthy sūrahs." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are some people among you who are causing dislike in the hearts of others." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then

addressed the S̲ah̲ābī and asked him why he does not read shorter sūrahs.

I went to a certain place and delivered a lecture. Some senior people came to me and said: “You are saying these things, while others come here and say such and such things [different from what you said].” I replied: “I have come here for the sake of rectification. If I come and speak ill of senior people here, how will rectification be achieved? As for those who came and said harsh things to you, you should go to them and ask them the reason.”

I believe that the ‘ulamā’ and Sufis cannot act independently. Even if they act harshly, they will have to remain within the limits of the Sharī‘at. In other words, they can act harshly only to the extent permitted by Allāh *ta‘ālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. It is not permissible to exceed the bounds. There are many challenges. If I engage with you in any matter, I am neither free to do as I will nor am I independent. If you too understand this point, it will become very easy for you. What I mean is that you too are not free; you are also bound to the Sharī‘at. Unfortunately you think you are free to do as you like. You neither consider me nor the Sharī‘at. You do not take due consideration because you have not recognized the Sufis even though you may have the love for them. I love you in the same way as you love me. Love is easy, but recognition is difficult. The recognition of Allāh *ta‘ālā* is anyway difficult. The recognition of Allāh’s servants is also difficult.

Note: This is totally correct. Only if Allāh *ta‘ālā* honours us with recognition together with love will the work become easy. (compiler)

Listen! On one occasion H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* was speaking remarkable

things on the topic of recognition. Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Phūlpūrī *rahimahullāh* said: "Hadrat! If it is difficult to recognize the friends of Allāh *taʿālā*, how much more difficult it must be to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* Himself!?" Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* approved of this statement. I thought to myself, you made such a beautiful statement that you even made Hadrat happy. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you.

I was saying to you that love is easy but recognition is difficult. If you have not acquired recognition, you should at least become its seeker.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a super gnostic. A man said to him: "Hadrat, I am ill. I cannot perform salāh in the Haram Sharīf. This is causing me immense sorrow and grief. I request you to pray for my good health." When the man left, Hadrat said: "He has not recognized Allāh *taʿālā*. If he is feeling well and he goes to perform salāh in the Haram Sharīf, he must express gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā*. If he is ill and cannot go there, he must be pleased with his lot and exercise patience." We learn from this that it is easy to be a lover but difficult to be a true ʿārif – one who has recognized Allāh *taʿālā*. You will have to subjugate the carnal self to acquire Allāh-recognition. You want to move around freely with your carnal self and satisfy its demands, and still acquire spiritual bounties – this is far-fetched.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* honour us with spiritual bounties through the blessings of our Hadrat. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

It is essential for every person to be sincere and devoted in this path. One cannot progress without it. A poet says:

> The tavern of love is open to everyone. The door of mercy is open to all. The table of bounties is laid out for everybody. However, there is one precondition for everyone: they have to be loyal.

I say, Allāh *taʿālā* is for everyone, the Dīn is for everyone, but the prerequisite is sincerity. It is required by everyone. I observed people living in the company of saints and jumping around a lot. Later on I learnt that they did not acquire the least bit of recognition and love. It is not the fault of the saints. The fault lies with us when we have no sincerity, neither in worldly matters nor in matters of Dīn. An attendant of a very senior saint used to say: "I lived with such and such saint but not a single day was for the sake of Dīn." Whether he said it out of humility or as a fact, he knows best. However, from what we observed of him, he did not say it out of humility. It is insincere people like this who have corrupted these places [the khānqāhs]. Yet they will blame the shaykh for not focussing his attention on them, this is why they have been deprived.

There were some people living in the company of a saint for quite some time. Another man arrived, stayed over for one week and received khilāfat. Those who were living there for so long began having bad thoughts. The saint was a man of the heart and a man of expositions. He came to know of their envy. He wanted to demonstrate the man's superiority to them. He asked them to go out into the fields and bring moist twigs. When they brought the twigs, he ordered them to ignite them. They could not be lit because they were wet. They said: "Hadrat! These twigs are wet, this is why they are not getting lit." He said: "I see! Wet twigs do not catch fire?!" They

replied in the affirmative. They must have assumed that saints do not know whether dry or wet twigs catch on fire. The saint was fully aware of this and wanted to remove the grime which was in their hearts. When he got them to affirm that there is a difference between wet and dry twigs, and established that they are so dim-witted that they still did not come to their senses, he said: “That man was a dry twig, so a slight focus from me ignited the fire in him and he became eligible for khilāfat within one week. But you fellows have not changed in the least. I am striving on you for so long but it is having no effect on you.”

When the shaykh addressed them directly in this manner and proved the sincerity of the recently-arrived man and their insincerity, they realized their defectiveness. Before this, they were blaming the shaykh for their own faults. Why should the Ahlullāh be miserly on the path of Allāh *taʿālā*?! They are such that even the one sitting at their side is not deprived. But if the seeker himself has a defect in him, it will certainly be a cause of deprivation. It is for the removal of this defect and the creation of sincerity in people that these saints may scold or reprimand those who come to them. In this way, they may learn the reality and become occupied in the task at hand. As for the Hereafter, that is known to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. He alone knows the position in which each person will be. Just as a murīd can be taken to task for his insincerity in the path, the shaykh can be reprimanded because of a murīd. The conditions which will prevail in the Hereafter cannot be applied to the external conditions of this world.

The saints recorded some amazing incidents on this subject. There was a pious woman who passed away.

The people performed the janāzah salāh and buried her. A shroud-thief had attended the funeral. When everyone left after the burial, he returned to the grave and began digging it in order to remove the shroud. He heard a voice from inside: "It is so astonishing that the forgiven one is stealing from the forgiven one." In other words, this thief who has been forgiven wants to steal from a woman who has been forgiven. If we heard something like this, we would be terror-struck. The man asked: "How is that?" A voice replied from inside: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me and said: 'I have pardoned all those who attended your funeral.' You too attended my funeral, so you are also pardoned." The man was quite moved. He thought to himself, Allāh's mercy is so great! Here I have come to steal the shroud but I am leaving with His mercy. People spend their nights seeking Allāh's forgiveness and cry to Him. Just look at Allāh's mercy! I came to steal a shroud but Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me because I attended the funeral. He was overcome by remorse when he thought of this.

The essence of what I am saying is that the matter of the internal self and of Allāh *taʿālā* is different. Each person is treated differently. No one can fathom it. There was a scholar by the name of Ayyūb Sakhtiyānī *rahimahullāh*. He did not attend the funeral of a man who was well known for his flagrant sinning and immoral ways. Someone saw the man in a dream and asked him how he fared in Allāh's court. He replied: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me solely out of His grace and kindness." The man added: "Go and read this verse to Ayyūb:

قُلْ لَّوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّيْ إِذًا لَّأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُوْرًا.

Say: "Had the treasures of my Sustainer's mercy been in your hands, you would have certainly held back [from spending] for fear of spending [all]. Man is narrow of heart."[1]

Hajjāj was known for his oppression and tyranny. Someone saw him in a dream after his death, so he asked him: "How did you fare?" Hajjāj replied: "I have been pardoned." The man asked: "How is that?" He replied: "I said to Allāh *taʿālā*: 'O Allāh! It is the general belief of the people that I will not be pardoned. I therefore request You to display Your mercy.'" Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned him because of this supplication.

There was a senior scholar who passed away. Hadrat Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said with reference to him: "A very senior scholar has passed away. I see the angels taking his soul." Although Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was very far away, he was able to see through exposition. All this relates to the grace and pardon of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what I am saying: We do not know how each person is going to be treated. We do not know which pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā* may be sitting in this assembly. I do not know how each one is going to be treated.

I do not want to fall short in teaching you what is supposed to be taught. I must leave no stone unturned in explaining the path to you so that each person may receive what is destined for him, and is not deprived.

Note: Look at the pain and concern which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had in conveying

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 100.

what had to be conveyed. This is the condition of the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

You people love me. How can it be that you treat me with love and I treat you with enmity!? If anyone thinks in this way, it is a fault of his intelligence. There is a need for intelligence in this path. People of intelligence and understanding really succeeded when they remained in the company of saints. Now listen to an incident which took place in Thānah Bhawan. It was after maghrib. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* needed to relieve himself. He asked his attendant to go and leave water in the bathroom. It was the norm in those days to first cleanse one's self with clods of soil and then to proceed to the bathroom where one would wash one's self with water. Saying this, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* proceeded to the toilet. In the meantime, the attendant filled a jug of water and kept it ready. Because it was getting dark, he also lit a lamp in the bathroom. When Hadrat entered the bathroom, he saw that the water was ready for him and the lamp was also lit. He was very pleased.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then related this episode in a gathering and said: "If an attendant wants to do something more than what he has been asked, this is how he should do it."

We learn from this that the saints were appreciative of their attendants. The attendant who used his intelligence in serving a saint also derived something. In other words, he acquired the good of this world and of Dīn. These saints are generally more fastidious than kings. Only a true lover and intelligent person can bear their fussiness. Because these saints experience comfort from intelligent attendants of this nature, they are grateful to them.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* relates an incident in his *Mathnawī*. There was a saint who was heavily in debt and was now on his deathbed. His creditors surrounded him and sat around his bed. The saint must have been really embarrassed and pained. Allāh *taʿālā* provided a way out for him. A youngster who was a sweetmeat seller passed by. The saint called him, bought all his sweetmeats and fed it to those who were sitting around him. The boy asked the saint for the money for the sweetmeats. The saint said: "If I had the money do you think all these people would be sitting around me!? You can join these creditors and sit down with them." The boy began crying profusely and said: "What will I tell my father? My father will beat me. You will have to give me my money." On seeing this, the saint took a cloth, covered his face and lied down. Just then a man knocked on the door and presented a large tray which had envelops filled with money equal to what the saint was owing each of his creditors. An envelop containing money for the boy was also among those envelops. The saint paid off all his creditors and they left happily.

Someone asked the saint to explain this entire incident. He said: "I made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* for the fulfilment of my debts. I received a reply that I will have to cry. I tried my utmost but I just couldn't cry. I said: 'O Allāh! I am unable to cry.' Allāh said: 'Very well, cause someone to cry.' The only plan that came to my mind was to buy sweetmeats from this youngster because he will not be able to exercise patience and will certainly cry. Subsequently this is exactly what happened. He cried, the prerequisite was fulfilled and my duʿā' was accepted." This is what Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* refers to when he says:

> Look! As long as that young sweetmeat vendor did not cry, the ocean of Allāh's beneficence did not gush forth.

We learn from this that sometimes it remains closed and man's crying opens it.

The conditions of the Ahlullāh are indeed strange. Initially, those creditors felt that once the saint dies, they will lose their money. But their story ended with their eating sweetmeats and also receiving their dues. They probably never ate so much of sweetmeats in their life because wealthy people generally focus on earning without bothering to eat. This was probably the first time they ate sweetmeats to their stomach's full. The bad thoughts which they had about the saint were also dispelled because he paid off all his debts before departing from this world. This is just one example of Allāh's beneficence which He confers on His pious servants.

> When you will something, Allāh wills the same. Allāh fulfils the needs of His pious servants.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These themes as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are extremely effective. They certainly get a person ready to rectify himself and to prepare for the Hereafter. Unfortunately no attention is given to reading these themes and to putting them into practice. How, then, can rectification be realized? May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us through His grace. Āmīn. (compiler)

STUDYING BOOKS IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR RECTIFICATION (1)

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the son of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. He wrote an article titled *Risālah Bayʿat* which appealed to me greatly and which I included in my book *ʿĀqibat al-Inkār*. He notes some useful and exceptional points. I want to speak a little more on this topic and to expound on it further. Because people do not have an affinity with these sciences, they cannot understand them unless they are explained clearly.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

> The reality of bayʿat-e-Sharīʿat is that when an uneducated person who spent his life in heedlessness and sin comes to his senses (he thinks of setting right his life, is remorseful over his past life, wants to turn to obedience and piety), then normally, such a person cannot realize these objectives without empowering over himself an ʿālim who is pious externally and internally. Studying the books of the Sharīʿat is similar to referring to medical journals. Everyone knows that without acquiring expertise in medicine and medical treatment, it is extremely difficult for a person to set right his temperament and repulse the illness which he is suffering from.

In the same way, practising on the view of every scholar will lead to confusion and misunderstanding. This is because every scholar is not of a sound mind and sound senses. Bearing this need in mind, the person will have to choose someone as his shaykh and mentor. Together with knowledge and piety, the latter will have to possess two additional qualities: (1) He must not tolerate laxity and carelessness in enjoining good and forbidding evil. (2) He must be an expert in identifying the condition of the seeker and prescribing the simplest and most superior treatment for him.

Once he finds such a shaykh, he must choose him as his mentor and hand over the reins of all his affairs to him. In other words, he must give him full control in matters related to his rectification. He must hold on firmly to obedience to him so that he can realize his objective. The fruit of realizing his objective is total salvation in the Hereafter, reaching Allāh's court and acquiring His pleasure.[1]

Studying books is not sufficient for rectification

The first point which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made is that studying books of the Sharīʿat is not enough for rectification. Rather, a person must appoint a pious scholar who possesses certain qualities (explained further on) to control his external and internal selves. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib

[1] *Risālah Bayʿat*, p. 27.

rahimahullāh then gives the example of medical journals and textbooks. These too will not suffice a patient. This is an excellent point made by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. I want to explain it further.

Nowadays there is a deluge of sciences and books. This is why there is this general misconception that reading books will suffice in the field of rectification. The reality is the exact opposite. I had been trying for quite some time to explain the difference in a manner which you will understand. That is, why is studying Dīnī books not enough and why is there a need for a shaykh? I considered this theme to be clear and obvious, but I felt it needed to be explained in a simple manner so that no murkiness remains.

Although reference is made to this in the quotation from Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, it will be a great achievement if people accept even after explaining clearly to them. This is why I felt the need to clarify it further. You can understand it as follows:

It is possible for a person to derive some benefit from reading the books of the Sharī'at. However, whatever is explained to him in the book cannot compel him into action. He will have the knowledge but it will be left to him whether he wants to practise on it or not. If he feels like, he will put it into practice. If not, he will not. Alternatively, he will practise on certain things and not on others. It may well be that he did not even understand what he read. Or he understood it, but did not remember it at the time when it was to be applied. It could well happen that he has the books but he sells them or he sells his knowledge. In other words, after studying, he takes up a job where he is bound to the rules and regulations of that place and cannot apply his knowledge there.

In short, knowledge cannot impose on him in any way and cannot force him into action. It is therefore possible that his knowledge does not benefit him in any way. On the other hand, if he makes a pious and qualified mentor his ruler, he will have to adhere to his rules. After all, appointing someone as your ruler means that you give him full rights over you and you cease to have your own choice. If you were to have your own choice, it will be a bad choice; whereas the choice of your shaykh will be a good one. It is not easy to fight against Shayṯān and one's carnal self. Only he can fight them who has some control and power over them. This can only be a shaykh. And to appoint such a person, he will have to be a pious ʿālim because he will make the seeker to practise on the Qur'ān through his wisdom and the authority which has been given to him. He is the one who will compel you towards rectification. This is the wisdom behind sending Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* even after sending down Books. Without doubt, a person has to follow the Qur'ān, but this is not possible without following a qualified person.

Medical issues and prescriptions are found in medical journals but no person can treat himself solely by reverting to these books. He will have to appoint a qualified physician to treat him so that he will uproot the patient's self-opinions and bad dietary practices. A physician can force him to take his medicines and reprimand him for not following his dietary guidelines. How can this ever be possible by a self-study of medical journals and self-treatment.

If this is the case with physical health, an intelligent person will have to appoint an expert for his spiritual health whose guidelines he will have to follow. This is a rational proof.

A traditional proof is found in the following verse:

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Allāh then follow me.

This verse states that if you want to acquire Allāh's love, you will have to follow the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Certain verses even instruct us to follow other verses. For example:

نَتَّبِعُ آيَاتِكَ

We will follow Your verses.

However, it is extremely difficult to follow the verses and injunctions without following a qualified leader who has already followed the verses and injunctions himself. A qualified leader will be followed and this will automatically result in following the verses. And it is very easy to do this.

This is an explanation of appointing someone as a ruler over you to which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made reference.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then points to a mistake committed by seekers. It is with regard to selecting a shaykh. He prohibits us from following every and other scholar because everyone is not of sound mind and sound senses. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is absolutely correct. We see people following those who, let alone having a sound mind, are absolutely senseless. Following such scholars will result in nothing but confusion and misunderstanding.

I say, if every scholar is not of sound mind and sound senses, and following him results in confusion, how can restricting one's self to the study

of books be enough? On whose opinion will he base his choice? If his choice of books is incorrect, will it not cause confusion and distress? A book too will have to be chosen by one's shaykh as he does with other matters. This is why it is not good to study any and every book without the permission of one's shaykh.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say: "The books on Sufism are for the Sufis, nor for the murīds. Just as medical journals are for physicians and not patients." This is a beautiful teaching based on absolute wisdom. I add, medical books are also for patients because they contain details about ailments. However, they must be studied under the guidance of a physician. In the same way, books on Sufism are for the murīds as well, but through the guidance of the shaykh. This is why we see a shaykh sometimes saying to his murīd: "Study *Ih̲yā' al-ʿUlūm*, study the *Mathnawī*; you will benefit from them." At the same time, the shaykh will prohibit others from reading these books because they will be harmful to them. It is for this reason that a shaykh has to be an expert, and he has to be proficient in knowledge and practice.

After explaining the need for a shaykh, H̲ad̲rat Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* lists the qualities of a shaykh. He says towards the end: In addition to having knowledge and piety, the latter will have to possess two additional qualities: (1) He must not tolerate laxity and carelessness in enjoining good and forbidding evil. (2) He must be an expert in identifying the condition of the seeker and prescribing the simplest and most superior treatment for him. In other words, the shaykh must be an expert in developing the capabilities of the murīd.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* concludes by saying: Once he finds such a shaykh, he must choose him as his mentor and hand over the reins of all his affairs to him. He must give him full control in matters related to his rectification until he realizes his objective.

Let me make one more point in this regard. The scholars and Sufis say that books alone are not enough for the rectification of the self and that the books of the Sharīʿat are like the medical journals. One cannot restrict one's self to medical journals for a cure of one's illness, in the same way books of the Sharīʿat alone are not enough for the removal of spiritual ailments. Let me present one proof for it.

The following is stated in *Nisāb al-Ihtisāb*:

قال العبد أصلحه الله تعالى ويكون له ثواب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر إذا كان مخلصا فيه وعليه وزر مخالفتهما إن لم يتب، نعوذ بالله والوعيد في حقه شديد. قال عليه السلام يؤتى بالرجل يوم القيامة فيلقى في النار فيندلق أقتاب بطنه فيدور لها كما يدور الحمار بالرحى فيجمع عليه أهل النار فيقولون يا فلان ما لك ما كنت تأمر بالمعروف وتنهى عن المنكر فيقول بلى كنت آمر بالمعروف ولا آتيه وأنهى عن المنكر وآتيه.[1]

A person will receive the reward of enjoining good and forbidding evil if he is sincere in it. If he is not sincere in it, he will suffer the consequences of acting against what he enjoined and forbade if he does not repent.

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[1] نصاب الاحتساب: ص ١٧٤.

We seek refuge in Allāh. There are severe warnings against such a person. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A man will be brought forward on the day of Resurrection and then cast into the Hell-fire. His intestines will come out of his body and he will turn around with them just as an ass turns around a mill. The inmates of Hell will gather around him and say: "What is it with you? Weren't you the one who used to enjoin good and forbid evil?" He will reply: "Indeed. I used to enjoin good but abstained from doing it myself. I used to forbid evil but I committed it myself."

We learn from this Hadīth that knowledge is not everything. Rather, it has to be accompanied with action and sincerity. If there is no action and sincerity, knowledge becomes a calamity. A poet says:

> If you place knowledge on your body alone, it will become a snake for you. If you place it in your heart, it will prove to be your friend.

The above-mentioned person who had been enjoining good and forbidding evil must have been doing it without practising himself. He had knowledge of the Sharīʿat but he did not acquire practice and sincerity for it. Sincerity is not the quality of a book, so it cannot be acquired from books. It is the quality of a sincere person, so it can only be acquired from a sincere person. We also learn that the books of the Sharīʿat alone are not enough for rectification. Rather, there is a need to appoint a pious ʿālim as one's supervisor and to subjugate one's self to him. Only then will rectification be realized.

There are two points to be considered. One is the books of the Sharīʿat (the Qur'ān and Hadīth), and

the other is a pious and righteous person. Both are needed in the field of rectification. Books alone are not enough, and a shaykh alone will not suffice. Even after appointing someone as your shaykh, you cannot be independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. In the same way, you cannot be independent of a shaykh by taking the Qur'ān and Sunnat alone.

This is a tricky point which causes many people to err. One group believes that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are sufficient for it, and it has no need whatsoever to go to the Sufis. I believe that only those who focus on their knowledge and intelligence will think in this way. They find it demeaning to submit themselves before a shaykh. Pride prevents them from doing this. There is no question about the Qur'ān and Sunnat being insufficient; they are most certainly sufficient. However, when are they sufficient? Let alone trying to understand the meaning and message of the Qur'ān, we do not even have the time to read it. Instead, we will waste time reading newspapers. It is far-fetched of us to study the Hadīth. This is our condition, yet we claim that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are enough for us. This clearly means that we consider it below us to submit before someone. We want to keep away from submitting before anyone, so we choose to claim that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are enough.

Then there is another group which says: "Our shaykh is the book." This too is definitely wrong. In fact, there is a specific occasion when this is said. I explained this point to one seeker on one occasion. I feel I should quote it here.

A seeker wrote to me thus: "I am reading such and such book." I thought to myself that he must not become so engrossed in that book that he does not

pay attention to the actual thing. So I wrote to him: “The saints have a saying that the book for a murīd is his shaykh.” He applauded this statement so much that I feared that he will be leaving one wrong and falling into another. As the saying goes:

فرّ من المطر وقام تحت الميزاب

He fled from the rain and stood under the water drain.

(From the frying pan to the fire).

This is why I explained this point in some detail to him. He wrote to me:

> Since quite some time I have been reading only the books and articles of Hadrat Wālā. I do not see any need whatsoever for any other book. However, if I come across a book occasionally, I will have a look at it. No matter what, I am grateful to Hadrat for having informed me of a very beneficial principle when Hadrat said: “Medical journals are for the physician; not for the patient. The physician is the sole book for the patient.” Glory to Allāh! What a valuable principle. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you.

I replied:

> You expressed your desire for a detailed reply so I am writing to you. I had said: Medical journals are for the physician; not the patient. In the same way, books on Sufism are for the shaykh not the murīd. The sole book for the patient is his physician. In the same way, the book for the murīd is his shaykh. This is the

statement of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. He used to make it quite often and it is – in its place – a beautiful teaching. However, I want to explain it further so that it does not lead to misunderstanding. You have already heard that the shaykh is the book for the murīd, and it really appealed to you. Now listen to this as well: If a person takes on a shaykh, he cannot become independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. The ʿulamā' have laid down the principle that the Qur'ān and Sunnat together is the criterion. It is stated in *Taʿlīm ad-Dīn*[1] that Shaykh Qawwām ad-Dīn said:

O dervish! The criterion and yardstick for this path is the Qur'ān, Sunnat and the way of the pious predecessors who were qualified leaders. Not the way of those who merely received permission and have occupied blessed positions merely because they are children of a certain dervish, and are therefore occupying his seat. If a shaykh does anything which is against the criterion, it will be corrupt and baseless. In other words, if a shaykh says or does something which is against the Qur'ān, Sunnat and ijmāʿ, it will hold no value and no importance. He will not be eligible to be a leader and a shaykh.

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[1] A book written by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*.

> The one who follows such a shaykh cannot reach his objective.[1]

Listen further:

In his *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* quotes from *Rāhat al-Qulūb* which is a collection of the statements of Hadrat Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh* compiled by Hadrat Sultān Nizām ad-Dīn Aulīyā' *rahimahullāh*. He says:

> The Sufis say: The murīd or shaykh who is not on the path of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and his condition is not in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat is a highway-robber.
>
> Look! This quotation clearly states that it is essential for the conditions of a murīd or shaykh to be in line with the Book of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. If not, he will be a highway-robber. The quotation before this stated that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are the criteria. We learn from this that the fundamental following for every person is essentially the Qur'ān and Sunnat. These two are the foundations for following. The shaykh follows them directly, and because the murīd does not have that level of competency of benefiting directly from them, he does it via his shaykh. Thus, he too follows the Qur'ān and Sunnat. If this is the case, how can he be independent of them?

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[1] *Ta'līm ad-Dīn*, p. 127.

Listen further!

While giving a piece of advice, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Tafhīmāt* that no one can be independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. His words are as follows:

> My first advice is that you must believe in the Qur'ān and Sunnat and practise on them. You must always occupy yourself in pondering and reflecting over them. You must make it a point of reading a portion of both on a daily basis. If you cannot read them, you must listen to a few pages of their translation. When it comes to beliefs, you must follow the creed of the Ahl as-Sunnat of the past. You must not pay any attention to the details and investigations which the scholars of the past turned away from. Furthermore, pay no attention whatsoever to the doubts and misgivings of the pseudo-rationalists. When it comes to the subsidiary matters of Dīn, you must follow those 'ulamā' and Hadīth experts who combined jurisprudence and Hadīth. You must weigh juridical polemics against the Qur'ān and Sunnat. You must then accept what is in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and reject what is not. Remember, the Muslim community will always need to present the polemics of the jurists against the Qur'ān and Sunnat.

In the above quotation as well, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* clearly states that at no time can the Muslim community be

independent of weighing the polemics of the jurists against the Qur’ān and Sunnat. This is because the Qur’ān and Sunnat are fundamentally followed. If the view of a jurist, or statement or action of a shaykh is followed, it is because they follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in every action and statement of theirs.

After this clarification, I hope that this point has become clear to you. However, in order to complete this discussion, I will present one example. This example is actually from Miyājī ʿAzīmullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was a special attendant of Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He mentioned it to prove that “the spiritual practices and meditations which are in vogue among the Sufis for the sake of spiritual rectification are not innovations”. He writes:

> They did not introduce these things into Dīn. Rather, they were made the means for carrying out those that were to be carried out by the Sharīʿat. These practices were for the sake of Dīn and not included in Dīn. You can understand this as follows: A physician wrote a prescription in which he prescribed *sharbat banafshah*. The patient needs to obtain *sharbat banafshah* but it is not available in the shops. So he gathers firewood, lights a fire, places a cauldron over it, brings sugar, water, *banafshah*, and other ingredients. He cooks all the ingredients and prepares *sharbat banafshah*. In this way, he obtains the medication which was prescribed. The entire sequence of events where he

gathered firewood, lit the fire, and so on are not additions to the prescription but for the sake of completing the prescription.

This is why I also say that the books of the Sharī'at alone are not enough for rectification. They too are like a prescription of a physician. A patient cannot regain his health merely by obtaining a prescription from a physician or by referring to medical journals. Instead, he will have to go to an expert to obtain his medicines according to the script which he gets from the physician. I used the word "expert" because if he goes to a novice, the latter will either not be able to differentiate between genuine and counterfeit medicines, or he will err in making the medicines. Consequently, the medicines will have no effect on the person.

Just as a prescription alone is not enough, instead it needs an expert; in the same way a person cannot learn Dīn solely by reading the books of the Sharī'at. He will have to revert to an expert in Dīn. Love, fear, humility, submission, etc. are qualities of a believer and not of a book. It is therefore not possible to imbibe these qualities without living in the company of someone who has these qualities.

This is a clear example for the point which I am trying to drive home. We have made worldly things our objectives, so we understand them very well. On the other hand, there is no desire for Dīn, so the very same principles become difficult to understand when applied to Dīn. In other words, when it comes to a prescription, no one thinks that it is sufficient. Yet, in matters of Dīn, people generally believe that studying books of Dīn is sufficient. This is where the problem lies today. People are reading books and feel

that they have no need to consult the experts. As for spiritual rectification and setting right of character, no attention whatsoever is given to it. I explained to you that spiritual rectification can only be realized when you appoint someone above you. Even if people do find a man of Allāh, their jealousy and pride prevent them from submitting before him.

Dīn actually refers to the life of the heart, and of wakefulness. This comes from concern for the Hereafter. The external forms of Dīn are seen everywhere, viz. salāh, fasting, lectures, assemblies, teaching, studying, makātib, madāris, etc. In fact, there are more than what they were in the past. However, those who have a true perception know very well that there is no life in them. The external features of Dīn are present but they are devoid of a soul. The reason is that if a place has no people of the heart and no people of spiritual rectification, how will they learn anything about the heart and spiritual rectification? If there is no knowledge of these things, how will they practise on them? If they do not practise on them, how will they develop spiritual conditions? Consequently, only the external forms of salāh and fasting will remain, while that place will be corrupt as regard the reality and the soul. This will result in misguidance.

This is why I am saying to you that focusing on the external alone cannot bring about satisfactory results. You will have to revive the hearts. They will be revived through fear and hope. And fear and hope will be achieved by looking at the conditions and lives of those who have these qualities in them.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very useful theme. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

rahimahullāh with the best of rewards. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

STUDYING BOOKS IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR RECTIFICATION (2)

I ask you: Why did the people of the past choose to remain in the company of experts? Why did they emphasise this? And why is the need for it not felt anymore?

The Sufis have gone to the extent of saying that a murīd should submit himself before his shaykh as though he is a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. The same theme has been excellently explained by a senior Egyptian scholar by the name of Shaykh ʿAlī Maḫfūẕ in his book *al-Ibdāʿ Fī Maḏārr al-Ibtidāʿ*. I haven't come across a better explanation on this subject.

After relating the history of Sufism, he explains the soul of Sufism and the basis of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. He writes:

ثم إنهم جعلوا الشيخ سلطة خاصة على مريديه حتى قالوا يجب أن يكون المريد مع الشيخ كالميت بين يدي الغاسل لأن الشيخ يعرف أمراضه النفسية وعلاجها، فإذا أبيح له مناقشته له ومطالبته بالدليل تتعسر معالجته وتتعذر.

فلا بد من التسليم له في كل شيء من غير منازعة. وقالوا إن الوصول إلى العرفان المطلق لا يكون إلا بهذا.[1]

[1] الإبداع: ص ٣٦٦.

They gave special powers to the shaykh over his murīds to the extent of saying: A murīd has to be to his shaykh like a corpse in the hands of the one bathing him. This is because the shaykh knows the ailments of his carnal self and the manner of treating them. If a murīd is permitted to dispute with his shaykh or demand proofs from him, it will be impossible or difficult to treat him.

It is therefore essential for the murīd to submit before his shaykh in every matter without disputing. They say: Cognition is not possible without this.

Look at the beautiful example through which the author portrayed the status of a murīd. There can be no better example for him. The author says that the Sufis established a certain type of power and control over the murīd. This is because the shaykh has knowledge of the ailments of the carnal self and the ways of treating them. A murīd should therefore relinquish all his personal choices before his shaykh. He must become like a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. The latter moves and turns the corpse as he likes, and the corpse accepts this. It is necessary for a murīd to become like this before his shaykh because if the murīd was given the right to dispute, argue and demand for proofs from his shaykh, it will become difficult if not impossible to rectify him. This is why it becomes essential for a murīd to obey his shaykh without any arguments. The Sufis say that it is impossible for a seeker to acquire real recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and spiritual cognition without this. The shaykh is the sole means towards gnosticism. If arguments and counter arguments exist between the shaykh and murīd, there can be no worse barrier between the two. If

there is an obstacle in the means itself, how will the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* be acquired!?

The author presents an excellent argument and provides cogent proofs on the issue of giving authority to the shaykh. This is undoubtedly the essence of Sufism. The Sufis have always been stressing this point.

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: Give total control to him over yourself, and make obedience to him a part and parcel of you.

This is on condition that he does not instruct you to do something which is against the Sharīʿat:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق.

Obedience to the creation is not permitted if it entails disobedience to the Creator.

Allāh *taʿālā* is, nevertheless, the absolute ruler. However, the shaykh is Allāh's deputy. This is why he too is referred to as an absolute ruler. The first step on the path of Sufism is for the murīd to obliterate himself before his shaykh. By obliteration we do not mean obliteration of the body, but obliteration of one's views and choice. It is not easy to do this, especially for the scholars. This is why we notice that when a shaykh is firm on these principles and applies them strictly, then those who do not want to adhere to principles accuse the shaykh of being overly strict.

People used to say that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is very strict. The fact of the matter is that he was not strict at all. Yes, he ensured that principles were applied. A lawyer from Patnah realized this himself and convinced his fellow

lawyers to appreciate this quality. The background to this is that when he went for h̲ajj, he asked one of the khulafā’ of H̲ad̲rat H̲ajī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*: “Who should I revert to?” The khalīfah advised him to revert to H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*. The lawyer went and presented himself to H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*. When he returned home, his fellow lawyers assembled around him and asked him about his experience with H̲ad̲rat [Thānwī]. He replied: “Brothers! Listen carefully! He is a man of principles while the world has become unprincipled.” These were intelligent people and were used to being troubled by unprincipled litigants all the time. They therefore smiled and appreciated what he said.

To sum up, this point is clear that mere reading of books is not enough for rectification. Rather, you will have to appoint a pious scholar to supervise you. It is essential for you to hand over the reins of your life to him. The task of rectification cannot be realized without this. It is difficult and virtually impossible to achieve rectification on your own. Another point which we learn is that every scholar does not have the qualification to do this. Rather, there are certain prerequisites for it. These were mentioned previously. When they are found in a person, he will be appointed as your mentor and shaykh. Or else, he will not. That is all. Inspiration is from Allāh *ta‘ālā* alone.

THE SANCTITY OF THE SHARĪʿAT (1)

We think that these body parts – eyes, ears, etc. – work of their own accord, and when they get sick, we go to a doctor who then puts them right. On the other hand, look at how Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* thought of them. Despite having perfect body parts, he used to make this supplication:

وَمَتِّعْنَا بِاَسْمَاعِنَا وَاَبْصَارِنَا وَقُوَّتِنَا مَا اَحْيَيْتَنَا، وَاجْعَلْهُ الْوَارِثَ مِنَّا، وَاجْعَلْ ثَأْرَنَا عَلٰى مَنْ ظَلَمَنَا، وَانْصُرْنَا عَلٰى مَنْ عَادَانَا.

Let us enjoy the benefits of our ears, eyes and strength as long as You keep us alive, and continue their goodness after our death. Take revenge from those who oppress us and help us against those who are our enemies.

Here we see Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saying that although these body parts are ours, it is in Your control to enable us to enjoy their benefits. It is only through Your will that we can benefit from them. If You do not will it, we can do nothing about it. The same theme is to be found in the following supplication:

وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْ اَسْمَاعِنَا، وَاَبْصَارِنَا، وَقُلُوْبِنَا، وَاَزْوَاجِنَا، وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا. وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ.

Bless us in our ears, eyes, hearts, spouses and progeny. Accept our repentance for surely You alone are the acceptor of repentance, the most merciful.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in another supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُوْلُ بِهِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيْكَ، وَمِنْ طَاعَتِكَ مَا تُبَلِّغُنَا بِهِ جَنَّتَكَ، وَمِنَ الْيَقِيْنِ مَا تُهَوِّنُ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا مَصَآئِبَ الدُّنْيَا

O Allāh! Give us such a portion of Your fear whereby it would come as a barrier between us and committing acts of disobedience against You. Give us such a portion of Your obedience whereby You could convey us into Your Paradise. Give us such a portion of conviction with which You could make insignificant for us the calamities of this world.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked Allāh *taʿālā* for fear although he was the chief of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* addressed the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* one day saying: "I am the most pious among you and I fear Allāh the most." Yet here we see him saying: "O Allāh! Just as I ask You for other things, I ask You for fear." Look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* maintained a balance by saying that the fear must not be so much that he is unable to do anything. Rather, it must be just that much which comes as a barrier from committing sins.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the overriding influence of tauhīd! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not merely ask for fear which comes as a barrier between sins and himself. Rather, he said to Allāh *taʿālā* that he must be totally in need of Allāh *taʿālā* for abstaining from sins and entry into Paradise; he does not want to be indebted to any creation.

If it was us, we would have thought that fear alone was the barrier, and that obedience alone would

convey us to Paradise. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying, give us that amount of Your obedience through which You convey us to Paradise. If fear was believed to be the barrier to Hell and obedience the conveyer to Paradise, belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh *taʿālā* would be lost. This is what we learn from the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, i.e. they do not allow any occasion of tauhīd to slip pass.

A man asked Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: "Hadrat! Belief in tauhīd is the most distinguished belief in Islam. Yet we hear certain things about the saints which make us think that they have lost tauhīd. One saint is reported to have said: 'I am the truth.' Another said: 'Glory to me! Look at how great I am!' How is it that those who have acquired Allāh's proximity are trampling the core principle of tauhīd?" When Hadrat Maulānā heard this question, he sat up and said: "Look at these modern inventions. A voice is recorded and imprinted on a record and played on a gramophone. A tape-recorder records a sound. When it is played, the same sound is heard. No one expresses astonishment at the ability of a plastic tape to deliver such a powerful speech. This is because everyone knows that the record is not speaking but someone else is. It is merely conveying what is imprinted on it. In the same way, when the saints make statements of this nature, they are not speaking themselves. Rather, the words of Allāh *taʿālā* are imprinted in them because of their extreme proximity with Him, which they then convey." A saint said:

> I am not saying "I am the truth." Rather, my Friend is instructing me to say it, so I am saying it.

The man fell silent when he heard this answer.

Now listen to another incident which is a clear proof of the knowledge and wisdom of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh.*

We were sitting with Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* on one occasion when a village registrar entered and posed a question to Hadrat *rahimahullāh.* He asked: "When children of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* passed away, the Prophets experienced grief. In fact, it is established that they even cried. When Hadrat Ibrāhīm, the son of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam,* passed away, he came to him, uncovered his face and said:

إنا بفراقك با إبراهيم لمحزونون

O Ibrāhīm! We are grieved at your separation.

Yet we hear that when the children of auliyā' pass away, they laugh. What is the reason for this? The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were perfect human beings and so were their life-conditions. Here it appears as though the condition of the auliyā' is superior to that of the Prophets'!?"

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* listened attentively to his question, sat up and said: "When a person has to undergo an operation and he is weak, he is made to inhale chloroform so that he loses consciousness and does not feel the pain of the operation. On the other hand, if a person is strong, he is operated without the need for him to inhale chloroform. He does feel pain but he is able to bear it because of his strength. In the same way, because the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are strong, they feel the pain but bear it on account of their strength. On the other hand, the auliyā' are weak, so they are

made to inhale the "chloroform" of ecstasy due to which they do not feel the pain."

Hadrat Maulānā Habīb Ahmad Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh*, the author of *Tafsīr Hull al-Qur'ān*, was present in the assembly. He was overcome by ecstasy when he heard this reply and said in a loud voice: "Hadrat, do not explain this to him; he is a village registrar. He will not appreciate this reply." He repeated this several times so I said: "This poor fellow posed such a thought provoking question due to which Hadrat gave this reply. Yet you are saying this about him!? Had he not posed this question we would not have had the opportunity of hearing such a beautiful answer."

There is a famous saying:

السؤال نصف العلم.

A question is half of knowledge.

The grand muftī of Pakistan, Maulānā Muhammad Hasan Amritsarī *rahimahullāh* was a senior khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. A large abscess had emerged in his foot and the doctors advised him that his foot will have to be amputated. He was taken into the operation room and the doctors wanted him to inhale chloroform so that they could carry out the operation. He asked: "What is the need for it?" They replied: "It is a major operation which will take quite some time. About 2-3 hours will be needed. You will not be able to bear the pain for so long." He said: "You don't have to worry about that; you do your job."

The operation started and Maulānā took a tasbīh and began occupying himself in dhikr. He did not turn his attention towards them. Later on, some people

asked him: "H̲ad̲rat, how did you bear the operation?" He replied: "It was nothing. Allāh brought before me the reward which I was to receive for this pain in the Hereafter. I lost myself enjoying the reward and did not feel a thing when my foot was amputated."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a lofty spiritual condition which is only acquired by Allāh's grace. I most probably heard from H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* that when the mu'adhdhin used to say *"H̲ayya ʿAlā as̲-S̲alāh"*, Maulānā used to feel as though the trumpet for the day of Resurrection is being blown. When the verses:

نَارُ اللّٰهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ. الَّتِيْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ.

The fire which is ignited by Allāh. Which climbs over the hearts.

Used to be read before him, he used to feel as though the heat of the fire is reaching his heart. This was indeed a lofty spiritual condition. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with it. Āmīn. (compiler)

When a servant establishes a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and a believer has such a strong affiliation, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with a special spiritual condition due to which he becomes Allāh's alone.

Spiritual conditions are decreasing by the day, only words remain. Even if a person delivers a lecture, it does not change the heart. A spiritual condition can only change in the presence of a spiritual condition. This can be realized only by remaining in the company of a person who has a spiritual condition. The ʿulamā' are protectors of the Sharīʿat and words. The Sufis possess words together with spiritual

conditions. Both groups are rendering important services. Congratulations to them.

I am explaining the need for both groups and the difference between the two. Understand it well.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said: Do not become influenced by a person merely by listening to his talk. And do not become his murīd until you have remained in his company and observed him from close quarters. If you find some effect in his company, he is reliable. If not, he is not. I am saying this because delivering a lecture has become an art. People are taught and trained in this field. They are taught voice modulation. When he delivers a lecture, it seems as though he is perfect when in actual fact he is nothing. He is devoid of spiritual treasures. Lecturers should focus on this as well so that their lectures have an effect and those listening to them can be rectified.

A deplorable incident of a lecturer

A man was delivering a lecture and the audience was listening attentively. Everyone was enjoying it when a youngster stood up and said: "O people! This is the man who murdered my father." The people became angry at the youngster because he had disgraced the speaker and wanted to hit the youngster. The speaker stopped them saying: "Do not say anything to him. It is normal for a person to err when he is young." The more the people tried to stop the youngster, the more he screamed. The people decided that they will have to save the Maulānā Sāhib from humiliation. They felt they should make a collection and give the money to the youngster to buy his silence. They collected a considerable amount to save

the Maulānā Sāhib's dignity, gave the money to the youngster and sent him off.

After a few days, the people saw the youngster and the Maulānā Sāhib in a field. They had unlawful foods and drinks before them, and they were consuming these with relish. The people went to the Maulānā Sāhib and asked: "How can you reconcile your lecture with this action of yours?" He replied: "I made lecturing a means for my livelihood. We have many other ways through which we deceive people and make fools of them."

There is another incident related about the same people. A man went to a masjid and asked: "Who is the trustee and principal of this masjid?" The people replied: "What is the matter?" He said: "Nothing. I have some work with him?" When the people persisted, the man said: "I found a bag of jewellery on the way. It contains very expensive and valuable pieces of jewellery. The person who lost it will certainly come by looking for it. I am a traveller and will leave shortly. I am also a poor man. I do not trust myself. I may use some of that jewellery for myself. This is why I want someone from among you to keep the bag safely. If anyone comes searching for it, you may give it to him after ascertaining his veracity."

The people of the masjid were quite impressed and said to themselves that this is a very trustworthy man. He is saying he is poor, yet he is handing over the jewellery to us. They decided to keep the jewellery for safekeeping, but felt that they should make a collection among themselves and give the money to this poor traveller.

They made a collection and gave a large amount of money to him. He took the money, gave them the bag of jewellery and left. He must have gone a short

distance when a crying and wailing woman came to the people in the masjid. She said: "O people! A major calamity has befallen me. I do the job of making up and preparing brides. I borrow different pieces of jewellery from the rich and decorate the bride. When the wedding is over, I take the jewellery and return it to its rightful owners. I receive some money for this work and live my life in this way. Not long ago, I had a bag of jewellery and I was passing by this way. The bag fell off and I do not know where it is. Those pieces of jewellery belong to various people who had given them to me as a trust. Now what answer am I going to give to them?"

The people said: "There is no need for you to stress. We have the bag of jewellery here. But you will have to give us a list and description of the jewellery first so that we can verify that it really is yours." The woman gave them a list with a description of all the jewellery. The people handed the jewellery over to her and, because they felt she was a poor woman, they gave her some money. Much later they learnt that this was merely a deception. The traveller and this woman were husband and wife, and they deceived people in this way. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā*.

I related these incidents to you while speaking on the subject that you should not be bluffed by a person merely by listening to his lecture. Do not be so gullible that you are entranced by his words. You must check his actions as well and see whether he is righteous or not.

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* performed the 'ishā salāh behind an imām. The imām read Sūrah az-Zilzāl in the salāh. The congregation departed after the salāh. Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* held his beard and remained standing there until the

break of dawn. He was saying these words repeatedly:

يا من يجزي مثقال ذرة خير خيرا، ويا من يجزي مثقال شر شرا، أجر عبدك النعمان من النار.

O that Being who recompenses for an atom's weight of good and for an atom's weight of evil, protect your servant, Nuʿmān, from the Hell-fire.

This was the spiritual condition of Imām Abū H̲anīfah *rah̲imahullāh*. The imām read the sūrah in the s̲alāh and everyone heard it, but it seized Imām Abū H̲anīfah *rah̲imahullāh* alone. Consequently, he remained awake the entire night and cried before Allāh *taʿālā*.

H̲ad̲rat Imām Zufar *rah̲imahullāh* relates: Imām Abū H̲anīfah *rah̲imahullāh* spent a night in my house. I observed him reading the following verse the entire night:

وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهٰى وَاَمَرُّ.

The Final Hour is more severe and more bitter.

Imām Zufar *rah̲imahullāh* also relates that he read the following verse the entire night:

فَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُوْمِ.

Allāh was gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind.

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* comments:

Did you see! These were the spiritual conditions of Imām Abū H̲anīfah *rah̲imahullāh*. People assume that these imāms of jurisprudence were imāms of external

knowledge alone. We learn from this incidents how much their hearts were occupied with Allāh *taʿālā* and what a strong bond they had with Him. After reading incidents of this nature, we can say that Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* was undoubtedly an imām of the internal sciences just as he was of the external sciences. The above-related incidents are clear proofs. These are evidences against all those who accept Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* as an imām. They ought to focus in this direction and follow him in this regard as well. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE SANCTITY OF THE SHARĪʻAT (2)

Allāh *taʻālā* describes the dwellers of Paradise as follows:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ (١٧) فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ (١٨) كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٩) مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (٢٠) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (٢١) وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (٢٢) يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ (٢٣) وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ (٢٤) وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٢٥) قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ (٢٦) فَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ (٢٧) إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ.

Surely the righteous are in gardens and in bliss. Eating the fruit which their Sustainer gave to them. Their Sustainer protected them from the punishment of Hell. Eat and drink with relish in recompense for what you used to do. Leaning back on couches well laid out in rows. We wed them to maidens with large eyes. Those who had conviction and whose children followed their path with īmān, We joined to them their children. And We did not decrease even an iota from their deeds. Every person is pledged for what he earned. We sent down upon them, without interruption, fruits and meat which they desire. Snatching from each other a cup. That drink will neither give rise to senseless talk nor will it incite to

sin. There shall wait upon them young boys of their own as if they were pearls hidden in their shells. They turn to one another, asking each other. They said: "Before this we were also in our homes, fearing [the wrath of Allāh]. Allāh was then gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind. We used to call out to Him from before. Surely He alone is benevolent, merciful."[1]

These verses describe Paradise and its bounties. While describing them, Allāh *taʿālā* concludes by quoting a statement made by the dwellers of Paradise: "Allāh was then gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind."

These verses are recited but the spiritual condition demanded by them is missing. The most terrifying stage is that of the day of Resurrection. Allāh *taʿālā* describes it in various ways in the Qur'ān so that man may take some effect from those verses. However, he is so heedless that he does not pay the slightest attention. Our pious predecessors were not like this. When the Resurrection was mentioned in their presence, they used to fall unconscious.

It is recorded in the books that there was a certain scholar during the era of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* who used to deliver beautiful speeches. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would also attend. He used to go every Monday to listen to him speaking. Hadrat used to say with reference to his talks: "What excellent comfort the heart experiences from his talks!"

Note: Unfortunately, those who are affiliated to these auliyā' and Sufis have no inclination to attend the

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[1] Sūrah at-Tūr, 52: 17-28.

lectures of the genuine ʿulamā'. The same can be said of those who are affiliated to the work of Tablīgh and Daʿwat. They feel they have no need whatsoever to attend the lectures of the ʿulamā' and Sufis. Consequently, ignorance is becoming common and the bad effects of this are observed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us refuge against ignorance. (compiler)

The above-mentioned scholar [whose lectures H̲ad̲rat Niz̲ām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rah̲imahullāh* used to attend] spoke on the verse:

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ.

Eat and enjoy [yourselves] for a short while. You are certainly sinners.[1]

In the course of his lecture, he quoted a quadruplet poem. The first line describes worldly pleasures. The next couplet reads thus:

> All these things are attractive today, but not tomorrow. In fact, engrossing yourselves in them is similar to a straw casting itself into the fire.

H̲ad̲rat Niz̲ām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rah̲imahullāh* went into an ecstatic state when he heard it. He remained in that state for quite some time. He used to experience this quite often. In fact, there were times when people used to place him on a bed and carry him to his house. This was a genuine spiritual condition regarding which there is no objection. You should strive to acquire such a condition.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 46.

Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* was an imām in spiritual conditions just as he was in jurisprudence. He surpassed everyone of his time as regards his piety and worship.

It is stated in *Maʿdin al-Yawāqīt* that Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* used to perform 300 rakʿats optional salāh every night. He was walking through an alley one day when he heard a woman saying to another: "This man who is passing by performs 500 rakʿats of salāh every night." Subsequently, Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* began performing 500 rakʿats every night. Such was the level of his integrity – he made his practice in line with the good thoughts which people had about him. He must have thought to himself, I can deceive the creation but I cannot deceive Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why he made his practice in line with what the woman thought about him.

A piece of advice to the ʿulamā'

This is why I advise the ʿulamā' to ensure that their lectures are not devoid of some story or the other of the saints. You should certainly relate their life stories because they combined words with spiritual conditions. If you relate their words to the people, their words and spiritual conditions will reach the people.

If this is the condition of the saints, what can be said of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*! It is our duty to relate the conditions and excellences of the saints. If we are not going to develop a spiritual condition within us and also abstain from relating the spiritual conditions of the saints, it will be extremely difficult to develop them. Whereas this era really requires of us to develop spiritual conditions. Today there is no shortage of words. Your words have filled the space

between earth and the heavens. Now tell me, when are you going to put all that into action?

The level of tauhīd of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn

There was a yogi in the time of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* who used to remove illnesses completely. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to suffer from bouts of unconsciousness. When he suffered from one such bout, his disciples decided to take him to the yogi. They were still on their way when Hadrat *rahimahullāh* woke up. He asked: "Where are you taking me?" They replied: "To such and such yogi." He said: "Turn back! How can you take me to a man who rejects Allāh *taʿālā*?"

After some time he suffered another attack which was worse than the previous one. Again the disciples felt that they ought to take him to the yogi. They feared Hadrat's disapproval but thought to themselves that it will be better if Hadrat is cured. This time, Hadrat did not regain consciousness throughout the way. The disciples reached the house of the yogi and placed Hadrat in front of him. The yogi focussed his gaze on Hadrat and extracted the ailment. Hadrat opened his eyes and found himself right in front of the yogi. He could not say or do anything because the yogi had done his job. He said to the yogi: "Tell me, how did you acquire this skill?" He replied: "My guru taught me to act against my carnal self. I did as told and reached this level."

Hadrat said to the yogi: "What does your self tell you about embracing Islam? Does it tell you to embrace it or not?" He replied in the negative. Hadrat asked: "When your guru told you to act against your self, is this included in that instruction or not?" He was stupefied when he heard this question, but he was

true to his principles so he said: “It is certainly included.” Saying this, he embraced Islam. When the light of Islam entered his heart he recognized who Hadrat really was and realized that he was on a very high level of spirituality. He therefore sat respectfully before Hadrat. This caused a huge clamour in Delhi and people began speaking about how Hadrat influenced such a senior yogi to enter the circle of Islam.

These are matters related to Allāh *taʿālā*. He could not tolerate such a senior saint like Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* to be indebted to a kāfir and for people to think that he was in any way superior to Hadrat. At the same time, Allāh *taʿālā* did not want this yogi who was serving Allāh’s creation and benefiting them to go to the Hell-fire. This is why He guided him and made him Hadrat’s attendant.

I say to you, this is what you must acquire. Our saints combined words with spiritual conditions. No matter where their words go, their spiritual conditions will go with them and people will be influenced by them.

Now listen to another story:

There was a tyrant king who used to imprison innocent people. He fell ill on one occasion. A saint was summoned and he requested him to pray for him by saying: “Hadrat, I am in a lot of pain. Make duʿā’ that my health is restored.” The saint did not refuse. Instead, he asked: “How many innocent people are their in your prison? Release them first and I will make duʿā’ for you.” The king issued an immediate order for the release of the prisoners. Once the saint got the king to do this, he raised his hands and made duʿā’: “O Allāh! You showed him the ill effects of his tyranny and oppressive actions. I now request You to

show him the joy of obedience." The king's health was restored there and then, and he got up.

The story of a slave

A slave belonged to a wealthy and influential man. Although it was a time of drought, he was going happily somewhere. Some people said: "O you shameful fellow! We are suffering from a drought, everyone is worried, yet you are laughing and happy!? How is it that the drought has no effect on you?" He replied: "Why should I worry? My master owns ten villages."

When a certain saint heard his reply he went into spiritual ecstasy and said: "Glory to Allāh! The master of this slave owns ten villages and because of this he is so happy and worry-free. My Allāh owns the entire earth and heavens, yet I don't have even that much reliance on Him as this slave boy has on his master!?" The moment he said this, his worry and stress left his heart and he reached the level of *tawakkul* – reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is what you call a spiritual condition and this is what I am asking you to develop. You want to acquire tranquillity of the heart while it is devoid of spiritual affinity, how can this happen? Only when spiritual affinity enters the heart will it experience peace and tranquillity.

I am saying to you that the 'ulamā' of the past were something else. They combined words with spiritual conditions. Those who came after them adopted the words but not the spiritual conditions. No one acquired the spiritual conditions like those of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum*. At the same time, those who came after them did not keep themselves empty of spiritual conditions. Now that we have no

concern about developing spiritual conditions, we are seeing the consequences of it, viz. let alone placing Muslims on the straight path, we cannot even put an end to their mutual differences.

I came across this incident in some books and also heard it from Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Anwar Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A Hanafī scholar went to perform salāh in a Shāfiʿī masjid. The Shāfiʿī imām indicated to the mu'adhdhin to call out the adhān in line with the Hanafī way. He then requested the Hanafī scholar to lead the salāh. He did not refuse. He stepped forward and performed the salāh in the Shāfiʿī way.

I am relating this incident to you to show that when a special condition develops in the heart, all differences will cease to exist. Allāh *taʿālā* confers special spiritual conditions to the saints by virtue of their actions and sincerity.

We were in Thānah Bhawan on one occasion. We had just performed a salāh and were still sitting. A few people were performing the Sunnat salāh when we heard someone screaming. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* immediately asked: "Who is it?" Someone informed him that it is Shāh Sāhib. Hadrat said: "Call him here." When he came to Hadrat, he asked: "Shāh Sāhib, what is the matter?" He replied: "Hadrat, I thought of my sins." Hadrat asked for some water, read and blew on it, and asked him to drink it. I thought to myself, my coming here has been most beneficial because I learnt how Allāh's servants cry out of His fear.

I am explaining spiritual conditions to you, but remember, they can only be understood through spiritual conditions. Mere words are not enough. There is another incident on this subject:

A man was reading the Qur'ān in the masjid in Thānah Bhawan when he stopped suddenly. He stood up, held the Qur'ān in his hand and proceeded outside to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. While walking towards Hadrat *rahimahullāh*, he was saying: "*Khudh Yā Shaykh*." (Take this, O shaykh). He was speaking in Arabic although he had no knowledge whatsoever of the Arabic language. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* realized that he was overcome by some ecstasy, so he indicated with his hand for him to sit down. Hadrat asked for water, read and blew in it, and asked him to drink.

When the man regained his composure, Hadrat asked him: "What happened to you?" He replied: "Hadrat, this verse seized me and did not allow me to go on. I thought to myself that I will have to present it to you."

Listen further:

A saint was occupied in samāʿ for three continuous days and was in a trance during this entire period. However, when it was the time of a salāh, he would perform wudū' and the salāh perfectly. When he came out of his trance after the three days, his attendants said to him: "Hadrat, three days passed in this state." He asked: "Did I perform my salāhs while in this condition?" They replied in the affirmative.

He then wrote to an ʿālim asking him if these salāhs were valid. He replied: "The salāhs which Hadrat performed while his heart had left this world are valid. However, I feel Hadrat should repeat them out of consideration to the Sharīʿat."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply. He fulfilled the right of the Tarīqat and the Sharīʿat. This is a true spiritual condition which is conferred to the friends

of Allāh *taʿālā*. There is no conflict with the Sharīʿat in it.

Listen further:

The salāh was being performed in congregation and everyone had joined it except for one man who was sitting separately. When the congregation was over, one person went to him and asked: "Why did you not join the congregation?" He replied: "Look there." When he looked, he saw 50-60 people who appeared like this man, standing in the congregation. The person was also a scholar, so he said: "I will not be carried away by this hocus-pocus. Salāh is not obligatory on all these bodies whom you made to appear like you. Salāh is obligatory on this physical body of yours which Allāh *taʿālā* made. So get up and perform your salāh." Because the man's spiritual influence was in conflict with the Sharīʿat, the scholar did not allow him to continue with it.

Listen to another incident:

Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* relates his personal incident. He says: "A brilliant light appeared before me. It had covered the entire horizon. I then saw an image within that light. It addressed me saying: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have withdrawn all obligations from you. If you want, you may worship me. If you do not want, you do not have to worship me. The choice is yours.'"

"When I heard this, I said: 'Get away from me, you cursed one!' The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and the image turned to smoke and disappeared. The cursed one then addressed me: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from me because you have knowledge of the injunctions of your Sustainer, and you are fully aware of your

conditions. I had deluded seventy people of the Ṯarīqat through a similar incident.'"

Someone asked Ḫaḏrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir *raḫimahullāh*: "How did you recognize that this was Shayṯān?" He replied: "He was making lawful something which Allāh *taʿālā* had made unlawful through Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is not the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something prohibited to His Prophets and then to secretly make it lawful to a specific servant. Allāh *taʿālā* never does this; it is against His norm."

Did you see!? This was the blessing of following the Sharīʿat. Ḫaḏrat Shaykh Jīlānī *raḫimahullāh* had acquired a correct understand of Dīn and was on an upright spiritual condition. This is why Shayṯān could not influence him in any way. The Sharīʿat came from Allāh *taʿālā* and was revealed to Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you cast it aside and search for saintliness you will never find it. Allāh *taʿālā* can only be reached through the Sharīʿat and salvation in the Hereafter will be gained by following it alone. The Sharīʿat is the most essential thing. If you hold on to the Sharīʿat you will find the Ṯarīqat as well. After all, the Ṯarīqat refers to a spiritual condition. If you do good actions, you will develop that spiritual condition.

I related the story of the saint who was in a trance for three days, yet he was fully conscious at the times of s̱alāh. He performed his wuḏū' correctly, and was fully aware of the times of s̱alāh and the number of rakʿats when he performed those s̱alāhs. This is undoubtedly a great feat. However, a greater feat of his was that when he regained consciousness, he thought about his s̱alāhs and inquired about their validity. When he received the reply, he repeated his

salāhs. This is true saintliness and dervish-ness which is in line with the Sunnat in the sense that he did not allow an order of the Sharīʿat to be left out.

There are thousands of incidents of this nature related to the saints. From them we learn how they upheld the sanctity of the Sharīʿat.

My purpose in relating them to you is to show you that the Sharīʿat is extremely important. The more you believe in it and the more you uphold its sanctity, the higher the rank you will reach. In other words, your sanctity is dependent on the sanctity which you give to it. If you respect it, Allāh's creation will accept you and treat you with respect. If you disregard it, you yourself will be disgraced and Allāh *taʿālā* will remove the respect of people towards you from their hearts.

As for the Dīn, it belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. It will remain until the day of Resurrection. If you do not respect it, Allāh *taʿālā* will create other nations who will uphold its sanctity.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful topic which ought to be read with the heart and soul. Unfortunately, even the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* do not like these topics. When will we ever read them and practise on them? Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

AN ASSEMBLY OF RECTIFICATION

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* said:

> Give so much of respect to knowledge that its obligatory rights are continually fulfilled.

He said:

> Knowledge refers to learning the realities of things.

Note: This is a comprehensive definition of knowledge. It could be defined in this way only by the true men of Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* had disciples who were ʿulamā' and laymen. He used to train and tutor each one according to his status. In the above statements, he addresses the ʿulamā' and says to them that they must respect knowledge in such a manner that they fulfil its obligatory rights. He then explains the reality of knowledge by saying that it entails learning the realities of things. In other words, if a person cannot fathom the realities of things, he is an ignoramus. The most we could say about him is that he knows the words and has no knowledge at all of the meanings. If the realities of things are not exposed to a person, he cannot guide others merely through words. When he explains to people, then in addition to his words being conveyed to them, the ignorance of his heart will also go across. On the other hand, when the one to whom the realities have been exposed addresses the masses, then the words together with the realities will be transferred to his addressees.

I would like to explain the statements of Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh*. Listen attentively. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ.

After having destroyed the first generations, We gave to Mūsā the Book as an enlightenment for the people, a guide and a mercy so that they may remember.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says in his commentary to this verse: When the intellect of the seeker of truth is set right, it is known as *basīrah* – enlightenment. When he accepts the injunctions, it is *hidāyah* – guidance. The fruit of guidance is acceptance in Allāh's court and closeness to Him. This is *rahmah* – mercy.

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent explanation. Look at how he exposed the reality. We would have merely learnt the words and probably their translation. We could not have fathomed their reality. It is easy to memorize words, but difficult to understand their reality. After all, it is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*; it is not easy to understand. It requires striving and bearing of difficulties.

Note: This is why people like us generally do not turn our attention in this direction. Consequently, we remain empty as regards the sciences of the Qur'ān. (compiler)

Look at how Hadrat *rahimahullāh* explained the words *basīrah, hidāyah* and *rahmah*. The first refers

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[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 43.

to understanding and comprehension. The second to accepting the orders. And the third refers to the fruit of it i.e. closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*. We conclude from this that the absence of guidance today is due to an absence of enlightenment and understanding. If a person does not understand in the first place, how is he going to practise? If he does not practise, how will he acquire the fruits of the practice?

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (compiler)

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* says further:

> Fulfil the rights of īmān through the Sharīʿat and your intellect.

This is because the Sharīʿat refers to the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā*. If you are not going to learn them, how will you fulfil the rights of īmān? He makes reference to the intellect as well because the rights of īmān can be fulfilled only through the intellect. In the absence of the intellect, the rights of īmān will not be fulfilled. The Sharīʿat can be recognized solely through the intellect and also the one who follows the Sharīʿat. Without it, how can its rights be fulfilled? There is a famous saying: Man can recognize his self solely through his intellect. Recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is also acquired through the intellect.

A scholar had gone to a certain place to deliver a lecture. A man said to me with reference to that scholar: "I decided to check with which foot he exits the masjid; the right or the left. And does he wear his shoe of the right foot first or the left. When I watched him, I saw him exiting with the right foot. I concluded that he is not worthy of anything. When he delivered his lecture, it had no effect." This is our general

condition today, except those whom Allāh *taʿālā* has guided.

A Hadīth states that in the latter part of time, the similitude of people will be like 100 camels but not a single one will be worthy of riding on. This means that there will be very few practising people. We are certainly experiencing that time today.

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* says further on:

> The reality of īmān is to attest verbally and to have conviction in the heart.

He adds:

> Adhere to the injunctions of Islam. Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation of Islam. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

We learn from this that when a person follows the Sharīʿat and turns away from the demands of his temperament, he will be called a Muslim.

A separate explanation for each one is found in the texts and we also explain them in that way. However, because these personalities are experts, they combine both and define them as done above. That is, Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament.

The Qur'ān states:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

We then placed you on a path concerning matters of religion. So follow this path and do not follow the desires of the ignorant.[1]

We learn from this that it is obligatory for the entire ummat to follow the Sharīʿat and haram to follow the desires of the ignorant ones. A scholar who has an affinity with the Qur'ān will explain this much. He will also say that we should not act on the demands of the carnal self. However, to combine both by saying that Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament, this I did not hear from anyone. It is a beautiful statement. The reason for combining both is that it is really the natural demands which stop a person from following the Sharīʿat.

He then says: Acquire genuine recognition. The reality of it is to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* with His Oneness. In other words, believe in the Oneness of His Being and the uniqueness of His attributes. Make Him the sole objective and quest. Believe that He alone is the real doer. This is recognition.

The story of Hadrat Junayd

Ibn ʿAtā *rahimahullāh* relates that Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* used to say:

I could not fall asleep one night so I decided to get up and complete my spiritual incantations. However, I did not experience the joy which I normally did. I thought to myself that I should go back to bed, but I could not fall asleep. I sat up and found no comfort in that as well. I opened the door and walked outside. I walked for quite a distance and then saw a man

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 18.

lying down with a sheet covering him. When he heard my footsteps, he got up, looked at me and said: "Abul Qāsim, where are you going at this hour?" I replied: "How did you make out that I am Abul Qāsim seeing that your head is still covered with the sheet?" He replied: "It was I who called for you. I had said to Allāh *taʿālā*: 'O Allāh, send Junayd.'"

I asked: "O my sayyid! Did you call me here for no reason?" He replied: "No. I actually prayed to the mover of hearts – Allāh *taʿālā* – to direct your heart to me." I said: "It was the mover of hearts who moved me to come here. Now what is the need to call for me in this way? You could have sent someone to call me, and I would have come to you." He replied: "I was faced with a problem which only you could solve. It was necessary for me to meet you, and this is why I adopted this method." I asked: "Very well, what is the problem?" He said: "I want you to answer my question:

متى يصير داء النفس دواها؟

When will the illness of the carnal self become its medication?

H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* was a Sufi master, so he replied spontaneously:

إذا خالفت النفس هواها.

When the carnal self opposes its desires.

When he heard this reply, the man addressed his self: "You have now heard the answer from H̲ad̲rat Junayd. I had given you the same answer but you did not pay heed. Will you listen to me now that you heard it from Sayyid at̲-T̲ā'ifah?"

Do you know why I am relating this to you? I am doing it so that you may realize that this is a very important matter in the eyes of the seniors and saints. In other words, proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is dependent on giving up the desires of the carnal self. They fought it and forced it into their obedience.

There is a point which I repeated several times when I was in Mumbai, and I said it to you as well. A very long time ago I had an associate who was a murīd of a certain saint. He said to me: "My shaykh used to say that the reason why the ʿulamā' do not become saints is that they do not occupy themselves in spiritual practices." I said to him: "First of all it is wrong to say that the ʿulamā' do not become saints because saintliness is an affiliation between the servant and Allāh *taʿālā*. It is known to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. We cannot say with reference to a layman or an ʿālim that he is not a saint. What you have to understand is that once a person establishes a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, he is a saint; whether he is an ʿālim or a layman."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a decisive verdict which we ought to bear in mind. (compiler)

The other reason which he gave – that the ʿulamā' do not occupy themselves in spiritual practices – is also not correct. The fact of the matter is that the one who does not subdue the carnal self is not a saint. The one who subdues it is a saint. If an ʿālim follows the dictates of his self, he will not be a saint. If he gives up following it, he will become a saint because he has now acquired Allāh's recognition.

In short, spiritual practice alone is not the basis for saintliness. Rather, it is subduing of the carnal self. The ʿulamā' who were present when I explained it in this way approved of it. I also said to the person: "If

your ʿulamāʾ are not saints, when did you become a saint? Why are you angry at those ʿulamāʾ? You should be angry at yourself first and follow the Sharīʿat. Do not obey your carnal self. You will not be able to follow the Sharīʿat as long as you do not give up obedience to your carnal self."

There was a saint in Delhi who said this repeatedly: "I am not your servant and you are not my Allāh. Why, then, should I obey you?" People who passed by and heard him saying this would express their disapproval and continue on their way. One man stopped to ask him, and said: "Shāh S̲āh̲ib, what is this which you are saying?" He replied: "You are the only one in Delhi who came to ask me this question. The fact of the matter is that my carnal self is constantly demanding something of me. So I say to it: 'I am not your servant and you are not my Allāh. Why, then, should I obey you?' All the people of Delhi assume that I am addressing Allāh *taʿālā*. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such utterances."

I say, the desire of the carnal self is the worst opponent in Allāh's path. Whatever is worshipped to the exclusion of Allāh *taʿālā* is due solely to the carnal self. This is why those who reach high ranks in Allāh's court do so by putting an end to the demands of their carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Sustainer and stopped his self from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

It is extremely difficult for those who have been rearing the self since childhood to give up its demands and to stop it from its desires.

People want an amulet (*taʿwīdh*) which will put an end to the desires of the self so that they do not have to strive to subdue it. This cannot happen. People are being destroyed because of the self and they are critically stressed. I am saying this because people come to me and ask me for amulets. I say to them: "I know the amulet for it but if I tell you, you will not accept. If you want refuge from the self, the preventatives have been provided by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. But you find it too hard to do. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to seek refuge as in the following invocation. Read it and practise on it.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الصَّمَمِ، وَالْبُكْمِ، وَالْجُنُوْنِ، وَالْجُذَامِ، وَسَيِّئِ الْاَسْقَامِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from deafness, dumbness, madness, leprosy and evil illnesses.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِيْ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from the mischief of my self.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is sinless but he is still seeking refuge from the mischief of his self. This is so that his followers may learn from him. After all, his ummat is duty-bound to follow him. Since he is asking Allāh *taʿālā* to protect him from the mischief of his self, and when Allāh *taʿālā* gives refuge to someone, can it ever be possible for the self

to rebel? It is only when Allāh *taʿālā* saves a person can he be saved.

A man used to say to me: "When the adhān used to be called, I felt as though the trumpet for the Resurrection was blown. Then when I proceeded for the salāh, I used to experience intense joy. As for my private conversation with Allāh *taʿālā*, that is beyond description. I used experience:

الصلوة معراج المؤمنين.

Salāh is the ascension of the believer.

When I used to read the Qur'ān in salāh, the congregation used to go into ecstasy. I myself used to be affected by my recitation. The same effect would then be felt by the congregation."

The man came with all these spiritual conditions from Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*. When he returned to his hometown, he went to the graveyard, stood near the graves of his family members and seniors, and addressed them saying: "I have come with the treasure of the family which had disappeared."

He said to me: "The moment I said this, all those spiritual conditions were taken away from me."

He was left grief-stricken and sorrowful. If anyone praised him, he felt offended. He would say to them: "My spiritual conditions have been taken away from me, yet you are praising me!?"

He said further: "Now when I read the Qur'ān, my own voice does not appeal to me. How will it have an effect on others?"

The reason for this loss is that when he addressed his seniors in the graveyard, he said it out of ostentation. Spiritual conditions are acquired through striving and the blessings of the company of the pious. However, these are accompanied by ostentation and egotism which put an end to the person. When egotism enters a person's heart, it also creates pride. Consequently, he looks down on others with scorn and derision. This is why I say that it is not easy to subdue the carnal self. Many senior people cannot subdue it.

Note: Unless, off course, the person is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The seniors of Dīn say that the most tricky pass is the pass of egotism and love for position and authority.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* writes:

قد يكون في زيادة المال الطغيان، وفي زيادة العمل العجب.

Transgression is sometimes caused by excessive wealth, and excessive good actions causes egotism.

There is also transgression in knowledge. It is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Bihār* that knowledge causes transgression just as wealth does.

The egotism of those who do good actions is worse than that of the wealthy. A person is then utterly humiliated and all his spiritual conditions cease. He is left regretting for the rest of his life. Allāh *taʿālā* does this to remove him from his egotism. After all, he thinks to himself that he has become a saint. This in itself is egotism. The author writes about his own condition. He says that when he experienced any type of egotism in the course of treading the path, he

would be made to commit a minor sin. He would feel disgraced and realize that he enjoys no rank whatsoever. He used to think to himself that if a person commits sins, how can he ever be a saint? How can a sinner ever enjoy any rank? How can he claim to be a friend of Allāh *taʿālā*?

This is why the saints say that disobedience which creates submission and servitude is better than obedience which results in pride and arrogance. Shayṯān was cursed because of his pride. He used to go around saying that there was no one like him. He was therefore disgraced.

In his *Bustān*, Shaykh Saʿdī *raẖimahullāh* relates the story of a worshipper. It will take several hours to relate the entire story to you. I will relate the gist of it. He says:

I have heard from the historians about a man in the era of Sayyidunā ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. This man destroyed his life by spending it in ignorance and deviation. He was daring, audacious, hard-hearted, and his book of deeds was filled with darkness. In fact, Shayṯān was ashamed of his vileness. This is the description provided by the Shaykh. You will see further on how he became victorious and entered into a pure life which would have certainly caused Shayṯān to fall upside down and cry all his life for allowing this person to escape from under his wing. This shows that everything is in Allāh's control.

This person saw H̲ad̲rat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* just once in his life, and that too, from a distance. But his entire condition changed. It is related further on that H̲ad̲rat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* must have went on countless occasions to the virtuous person, but his end was totally different. The Shaykh continues:

I heard that Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* was returning from the forest when he passed by a place of worship of a worshipper (ʿābid). On seeing Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*, the ʿābid left his place of seclusion and placed his head at Hadrat ʿĪsā's *ʿalayhis salām* feet. On the other side, the unfortunate sinner was watching this scene from a distance and was quite perplexed. He became restless like a moth when it sees light and brightness. He felt ashamed in his heart and was staring at them with remorse just as a poor person looks at a wealthy person. The Shaykh then goes into some detail and says: This sinner began crying profusely and was saying:

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

This was the condition of the sinner. Now look at the condition of the worshipper:

The old sinner was sitting in one corner, crying and asking Allāh *taʿālā* to guide him. On the other side, the worshipper whose head was filled with pride was looking at the poor sinner from a distance and becoming annoyed at him. He was thinking to himself: "Why is this wretched fellow following us? He is an ignorant and ill-fated person. What do I have to do with him."

The Shaykh then quotes his statement which he made out of utter pride and haughtiness:

"I am annoyed by his pitiful sight because I fear some of his fire falling onto me. O Allāh! When the entire world gathers on the field of Resurrection for the accounting of deeds, do not cause me to rise with this sinner."

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* continues:

The worshipper was engrossed in these thoughts when revelation came to ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* in which Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Whether the person is an ʿālim or a jāhil (an ignorant person), the duʿā' of both is accepted in My court. I have pardoned his [the sinner's] evils and I shall convey him to Paradise by virtue of My mercy. If the worshipper feels it below his dignity to be with him in Paradise, tell him he should not feel any humiliation on the day of Resurrection because I will convey him [the fearful sinner] to Paradise and him [the fearless worshipper] to Hell. This is because the sinner's heart has been reduced to blood due to his pain and anguish. If the worshipper is proud about his worship, does he not know that humility and submission is far better than pride and haughtiness in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?"

In other words: The worshipper was intoxicated in his pride when Allāh *taʿālā* sent revelation to Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* saying: If this person is an ʿālim, so what? And if this person is a jāhil, so what? I have accepted the duʿā' of both. This was the duʿā':

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned the sinner his evil deeds and admitted him into Paradise solely out of His grace and generosity. Allāh *taʿālā* said: If this worshipper feels it below his dignity to live with him in Paradise, tell him he must not worry in the least about such an indignity. I will convey the sinner to Paradise and I will cast him into Hell. This is because the poor sinner had completely obliterated himself with repentance, while the worshipper relied on his worship. Does he not know even this much that

servitude and submission is better than pride and self-ego in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?

The Shaykh now issues a warning:

The statements of intelligent people are remembered. O Saʿdī, you too should remember this one fact: The sinner who fears Allāh, who trembles and shivers on account of his sins, and has his sight solely on Allāh *taʿālā* for the forgiveness of his sins; is better than the worshipper who is ostentatious about his worship.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to be overcome by fear and submission. He remained very far from ostentation and liked the same for his associates. He used to relate this story in his assembly so that people may abstain from this evil condition and internal sickness. (compiler)

THE IMPORTANCE OF DUʿĀ’

The author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* writes in the chapter on duʿā’ that one of its etiquette is that there must be presence of heart. The heart must not be heedless because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَعَالٰى لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُ الدُّعَاءَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لَاهٍ.

Allāh taʿālā does not accept the duʿā’ of a heart which is heedless and unmindful.

Consuming halāl is one of the prerequisites of duʿā’. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

أطب كسبك تستجب دعوتك.

Ensure that your earning is pure and your duʿā’ will be accepted.

It is said that duʿā’ is the key to fulfilling one's needs while halāl morsels are the teeth of that key. Just as a lock cannot be opened with a blank key, duʿā’ cannot be accepted without lawful earnings and halāl food.

Note: This shows the importance of consuming what is lawful. The acceptance of duʿā’ is dependent on it. Consuming halāl is from among the obligations of the Sufis. Allāh *taʿālā* instructed His Messengers to consume halāl.

يَا اَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا.

There are many incidents which show how Allāh *taʿālā* accepted the supplications of those who

beseeched Him at the time of difficulties and calamities. They can be accepted today as well provided the prerequisites are fulfilled.

A few incidents on the acceptance of duʿā’

(1)

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* passed by a man who was beseeching and begging Allāh *taʿālā*. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said to Allāh: “If it was in my power to fulfil his need, I would have done it.” Allāh *taʿālā* replied: “O Mūsā! I am much more merciful to him, but he is supplicating to me while his heart is attached to his goats. I do not accept the duʿā’ of a person who is supplicating to Me while his heart is with someone else.” Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* went to the man and informed him. He cut himself off immediately from his goats and focused on Allāh *taʿālā* with all his heart. His needs were fulfilled.

As long as he did not have presence of heart, his duʿā’ was not accepted. The moment he turned to Allāh *taʿālā* fully, his duʿā’ was accepted and his needs were fulfilled.

(2)

Hadrat Anas ibn Mālik *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* there was a man who used to travel between Madīnah and Syria for business. He would not join any of the caravans but would place his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and travel on his own. He was travelling from Syria to Madīnah on one occasion. On the way he met a thief who was on a horse. The thief shouted to the trader to stop. The trader stopped and said to him: “Take my goods and let me proceed on my way.” The thief replied: “The goods are already mine. I plan to kill you.” The trader asked: “Of what benefit will it

be to you if you kill me? Take my goods and let me be.” The thief repeated his plan. The trader said: “Okay, give me a chance to perform wudū’ and salāh, and to supplicate to Allāh.” The thief replied: “You may do as you want.” The trader performed wudū’ and four rakʿats of salāh. He then raised his hands towards the heavens and supplicated to Allāh *taʿālā*:

يَا وَدُوْدُ، يَا ذَا الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدِ، يَا مُبْدِئُ، يَا مُعِيْدُ، يَا فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيْدُ، أَسْئَلُكَ بِنُوْرِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِيْ مَلَأَ أَرْكَانَ عَرْشِكَ، وَأَسْئَلُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ الَّتِيْ قَدَرْتَ بِهَا عَلٰى خَلْقِكَ، وَبِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِيْ وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، يَا مُغِيْثُ أَغِثْنِيْ.

He made this duʿā’ three times. The moment he finished it, a man wearing green garments and riding a glittering horse came upon them. He had a spear in his hand. When the thief saw this man approaching, he left the trader and advanced towards him. When he got closer to him, this new rider attacked the thief, struck him and dropped him off his horse. He then went to the trader and said: “Get up and kill the thief.” The trader asked: “Who are you? I have never killed anyone nor will I be happy to kill him.” The rider went back to the thief and put an end to him. He returned to the trader and said: “Listen! I am an angel from the third heaven. When you made duʿā’ the first time, we [angels] heard some noise at the gates of the heavens. We said to ourselves, it seems that some event has occurred. When you made duʿā’ the second time, the gates of the heavens were opened and flames of fire began emerging from them. When you made duʿā’ the third time, Hadrat Jibra’īl *ʿalayhis salām* came to us and announced:

من لهذا المكروب؟

Who is going to help this man in need?

I requested Allāh *taʿālā* to permit me to see to the killing of this thief."

The angel added: "O servant of Allāh! Anyone who makes this supplication at the time of a calamity or difficulty, Allāh *taʿālā* will remove the calamity from him."

The trader then proceeded with his goods and reached Madīnah safely. He presented himself before Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and related the incident to him and quoted the duʿā' which he had made. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

لقد لقنك الله عز وجل عن أسمائه الحسنى التي إذا دعي بها أجاب وإذا سئل بها أعطى.

Allāh taʿālā taught you His beautiful names which, when He is beseeched through them, He responds. And when He is asked, He gives.

Note: We should make this duʿā' when faced with a difficulty or calamity. In fact, we should note it with its translation in our notebooks and make it a habit of reading it daily. (compiler)

(3)

I heard Ustādh Abū ʿAlī *rahimahullāh* saying: The king Yaʿqūb ibn Layth suffered from an ailment which all the physicians failed to treat. Someone said to him: "There is in your kingdom a pious man by the name of Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh. If he makes duʿā' in your favour, there is hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will accept his

supplication.” The king called for him and requested him to make duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* for him. Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: “How can my supplication in your favour be accepted when there are so many oppressed people in your prisons.” The king immediately released all those who were in the prisons. Sahl *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* then made the following duʿā’ for him:

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا أَرَيْتَهُ ذِلَّ الْمَعْصِيَةِ فَأَرِهِ عِزَّ الطَّاعَةِ وَفَرِّجْ عَنْهُ.

O Allāh! Just as you showed him the shame of disobedience, show him the honour of obedience and remove discomfort from him.

The king was cured immediately. He offered some money to <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Sahl *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* but he refused to accept it. Someone said to him: “What was wrong in your accepting that money and giving it to some poor people?” He focused his gaze on the pebbles on the ground and they immediately turned into jewels. He then said to his companions: “If Allāh *taʿālā* has given so much of wealth to a servant, do you think he will ever be need of the wealth of Yaʿqūb ibn Layth?”

<u>Note</u>: Glory to Allāh! Just look at his high position in Allāh’s court. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with similar acceptance. Āmīn. (compiler)

(4)

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Layth *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* relates: I noticed that Ibn Nāfiʿ was blind. When I met him again after a few days, I saw that he could see. I asked him: “How did you get your eyesight back?” He replied: “I saw a dream in which I was asked to make this supplication:

يَا قَرِيْبُ يَا مُجِيْبُ يَا سَمِيْعَ الدُّعَاءِ، يَا لَطِيْفُ لِمَا يَشَآءُ رُدَّ عَلَيَّ بَصَرِيْ.

I made this supplication and Allāh *taʿālā* restored my eyesight."

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to make this duʿā' for eyesight and insight. May He accept it in our favour. Āmīn. (compiler)

(5)

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* in the Qur'ān. He says:

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ وَّأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا ۙ وَّكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۚ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ ۙ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ۚ قَالَ يٰمَرْيَمُ أَنّٰى لَكِ هٰذَا ۚ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Then her Sustainer accepted her with a cordial acceptance and caused her to grow up gracefully, and He placed her in the care of Zakarīyyā. Whenever Zakarīyyā visited her in the room, he found some food by her. He said: "O Maryam! From where did this come to you?" She replied: "This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit."[1]

When the wife of Hadrat ʿImrān fell pregnant, she made a vow to Allāh *taʿālā* that the child which is in her womb will be devoted for His worship and service, and that she will not use the child for her own needs. She added: "Accept this child for You are

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 37.

all-hearing and all-knowing. You are hearing my plea and You are fully aware of my intention.”

Vows of this nature were permitted in those days, but made specifically for male offspring. She made this vow in the hope that a boy will be born to her. But when she gave birth to a girl, she said remorsefully: “O my Allāh! I have delivered a girl.” Allāh *taʿālā* says that she may be expressing remorse whereas Allāh *taʿālā* knows well the high status which this girl will enjoy, and that the boy which she desired would not have been equal to this girl in any way. She is superior because she will have unique blessings and excellent qualities. The mother of Maryam said: “I have named her Maryam and give her and her offspring in Your refuge against the accursed Shayṯān.”

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ

Then her Sustainer accepted her with a cordial acceptance.

In other words, males were normally accepted for such services but Allāh *taʿālā* accepted Maryam.

H̲ad̲rat Ibn ʿAbbās *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* says with reference to the words “a cordial acceptance”: When she gave birth to Maryam, she thought to herself that a daughter will not be accepted to render services to the House of Allāh (Bayt al-Maqdis). She therefore wrapped Maryam in a cloth and left her in an assembly of worshippers in Bayt al-Maqdis. Each one of them wanted to take the responsibility of caring for this child because she was the daughter of their imām, H̲ad̲rat ʿImrān. H̲ad̲rat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* who was the leader of these worshippers said: “I will take her and tend to her. I have the most right

because her maternal-aunt is my wife." The others said that they should rather draw lots, and the one whose name comes out will have the right to tend to her. Everyone agreed to this. Each one handed over his pen with which they used to record divine revelation. The pens were collected and placed under a cloth. One of the children who used to live in Bayt al-Maqdis was called and asked to remove a pen from under the cloth. He did as told and the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* came out. The others expressed their disapproval in the manner in which the lots were drawn. They said: "All the pens must be thrown at once in the water. The person whose pen flows first, comes onto the surface and then stops will be appointed to take care of Maryam." They cast their pens in the Jordan River. On this occasion too, the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* emerged the victor. Some of them said, this is not the way lots are drawn. Instead, the one whose pen flows with the current will be made responsible for Maryam. Again, the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* flowed with the current while the other pens stopped flowing.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was therefore appointed as the guardian of Maryam.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further:

وَّأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا

…and caused her to grow up gracefully.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Allāh *taʿālā* caused her to grow swiftly. The extent to which children normally grew up in one year, she would grow within one day.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا

Whenever Zakarīyyā visited her in the room, he found some food by her.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the word "mihrāb" as a room in the upper storey of Bayt al-Maqdis. It was reserved for Maryam. The door to this room was raised so that anyone wanting to enter the room had to climb a ladder to do so. It was similar to the door of the Kaʿbah.

Ibn Jarīr *rahimahullāh* reports from Hadrat Rabīʿ *rahimahullāh* who said that none other than Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* could go to her. When he used to return from her, he used to close all seven doors. Despite this, she used to have summer fruits in winter and vice versa. This is why Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* asked her:

أَنّٰى لَكِ هٰذَا.

From where does this fruit which is so different from the fruit of the world come to you? Also, how does it reach you bearing in mind that all the doors to your room are locked? She replied:

قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ

She replied: This comes from Allāh.

Allāh *taʿālā* provides me with these foods without any human intervention. You should not be astonished by this and never consider it to be far-fetched because:

إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

If Allāh *taʿālā* wills, He can give sustenance without the adoption of any means.

(6)

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* relates an incident from the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Hadrat Jābir *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not eat any food for a few days. When he found this quite difficult to bear, he went to the houses of his pure wives but none of them had any food. He went to the house of his daughter Hadrat Fātimah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* and asked: "Do you have anything to eat, I am feeling extremely hungry." She replied in the negative. On hearing this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* got up to leave. As he left her house, one of the neighbours sent two rotīs and some meat as a gift to her. She took the food and placed it in a container, thinking to herself that she will not give it to any of her family members. Instead, she will keep it aside for her father. She thought this even though she and all her family members were also hungry.

She sent one of her sons to call Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* When he arrived, she said: "Allāh *taʿālā* has sent something which I covered and left aside for you." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Bring the container here." She relates: "When I went to bring the container and uncovered it, I found that it was filled with rotīs and meat. I was surprised and thought to myself that Allāh *taʿālā* has indeed blessed it. I expressed my thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* and brought the container of food to my father.

He too expressed gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* and asked: "Where did this food come from?" I replied: "It has come from Allāh *taʿālā* because He gives sustenance to whomever He wills without the means and without us being eligible for it." When he heard my reply, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "All praises are due to Allāh *taʿālā* who made you similar to the chief-woman of the Banī Isrāʾīl (referring to H̲ad̲rat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām*) because it was also her habit to reply in the same way when she was asked about where she received her sustenance from." Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then assembled H̲ad̲rat ʿAlī *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu*, H̲ad̲rat H̲asan *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu*, H̲ad̲rat H̲usayn *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* and the other people of the house, and they all ate together. Everyone ate to his fill and some food was still left over. H̲ad̲rat Fāt̲imah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* sent it to her neighbours.

Just as H̲ad̲rat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* used to receive non-seasonal food, Allāh *taʿālā* gave it to the righteous ones from the community of Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You have just read the story of H̲ad̲rat Fāt̲imah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā*.

(7)

H̲ad̲rat Khubayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* was a S̲ah̲ābī. A similar incident about him is related in the H̲adīth. The sons of H̲ārith ibn ʿĀmir ibn Naufal bought him for 100 camels from the unbelievers who had imprisoned him. They did this so that they could kill him to avenge the death of their father. This is because H̲ad̲rat Khubayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* had killed their father. It is related in *S̲ah̲īh̲ Bukhārī* that in the course of his imprisonment, H̲ad̲rat Khubayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* asked one of the sons of H̲ārith for a shaver so that he could purify himself. Incidentally,

a small child came to Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* around the same time. Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* seated him in his lap. (The scene which we can visualize is that Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had a blade in his hand and a child in his lap). When a woman saw this scene, she became terrified. She thought to herself that here is this prisoner and my child is in his lap! What if he kills my child!?

Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* perceived her fear and said: "There is no need for you to fear; I will never do such a thing (nor does my Dīn permit me to raise a hand against women and children)." The woman relates: "I have not come across a better prisoner than Khubayb." She also relates: "In the course of his incarceration, I saw Khubayb eating grapes even though no fruits were available in Makkah during that time." Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was in shackles and chains, yet he was receiving grapes. They were obviously sent to him by Allāh *taʿālā*.

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

It is related with regard to the same Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that when he was about to be put to the gallows, he asked for permission to perform two rakʿats of salāh. He was given permission. He performed the two rakʿats. They were so accepted in Allāh's court that they became an eternal Sunnat for all innocent people who were put to the gallows. He read the following couplets after performing the two rakʿats:

ولست أبالي حين أقتل مسلما – على أي شق كان لله مصرعي

وذلك في ذات الإله وإن يشاء – يبارك على أوصال شلو ممزعي

As long as my martyrdom is for Islam, I do not bother about which side I fall on. After all, it is solely for Allāh taʿālā. If He wills, He can bless every part of my body which has been chopped off and cut up.

He was then raised to the crucifix and his face was turned away from the qiblah. He said: "I do not bother about it, because no matter in which direction one turns, He will find Allāh *taʿālā*." The unbelievers then said to him: "We will release you if you renounce Islam." H̲ad̲rat Khubayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* replied: "I will not give up Islam even if you give me the entire earth. Let alone one life, I am prepared to give a hundred lives for the sake of Islam."

It is related that even at the final hour, H̲ad̲rat Khubayb *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* made this supplication: "O Allāh! These are all my enemies. I have no friend here. I request you to convey my salām to my beloved Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*." Zayd ibn Aslam *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: "I was present in the assembly when the effects of divine revelation appeared on the face of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He then said to us: 'The unbelievers have killed Khubayb. Jibra'īl has just come to me and conveyed his salām.' Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied to his salām by saying: 'May the peace and mercy of Allāh be on him.'"[1]

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[1] Quoted from *Tārīkh H̲abīb Ilāh*.

(8)

On seeing the supernatural manner in which Hadrat Maryam received sustenance and hearing her statement:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* developed a special conviction in the immense power of Allāh *taʿālā*. He was so overcome by this spiritual condition that he presented a need to Allāh *taʿālā* which He accepted. This is also related in the Qur'ān:

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ

It was at this point that Zakarīyyā supplicated to his Sustainer.

Hadrat Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh* says that when Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* saw the fruits of summer in winter and vice verse which Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* used to bring to Hadrat Maryam, he developed a desire for a son. He thought to himself that if Allāh *taʿālā* can provide non-seasonal fruit to Maryam, He can most certainly create within his wife the ability to conceive a child. He took a bath on the night of the 27th of Muharram, turned to Allāh *taʿālā* and supplicated to Him even though he was gone old and his wife was barren.

The scholars say that Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* developed this desire even though he was old and his wife was barren because when he observed the manner in which Hadrat Maryam was receiving various foods and fruits, he realized that a child can

be born to an old man and a barren woman. This thought came to his mind because a child is also like a fruit, and a woman being barren is similar to non-season. If fruit can be provided out of season, a child can be conceived by a barren woman. An old man can be given the strength of a young man, and a barren woman can be turned into a fertile one.

Another reason for his supplication could be that when contrary to the norm of accepting elderly males for the service of Bayt al-Maqdis, a young girl (Hadrat Maryam) was accepted, then also contrary to the norm, an old man like him can have children.

Yet another reason could be that when he saw Hadrat Maryam starting to speak at an age when children do not normally speak, he thought to himself that his wife too can conceive a child at an age when a woman does not normally conceive. Alternatively, the urge to supplicate to Allāh *taʿālā* developed in him when Hadrat Maryam replied to his question by saying:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

If Allāh *taʿālā* can provide sustenance without the means, He can give a child to my wife even though she is barren.

(9)

No matter what, when Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was impressed by what he observed in Hadrat Maryam, he made this supplication to Allāh *taʿālā*:

قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ج اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ.

He said: "O my Sustainer! Bestow upon me, from You, pure children. Surely, You are the hearer of supplications."[1]

H̲ad̲rat H̲asan Bas̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* relates that H̲ad̲rat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* used to make this supplication as well:

يا رازق مريم ثمار الصيف في الشتاء وثمار الشتاء في الصيف، هب لي من لدنك ذرية طيبة.

O the Being who provides Maryam with summer fruits in winter and vice versa, bless me with a pure offspring from Yourself.

Allāh *taʿālā* accepted his supplication as related in the Qur'ān:

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلٰئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَآئِمٌ يُّصَلِّيْ فِي الْمِحْرَابِ إِنَّ اللهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيٰى.

The angels then called out to him when he was standing in prayer in the room, that Allāh gives you the glad tidings of Yah̲yā.[2]

Glory to Allāh! Both these incidents – providing sustenance to H̲ad̲rat Maryam without any outward means and a child to H̲ad̲rat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* in old age – were supernatural incidents. Allāh *taʿālā* relates both in the Qur'ān. In this way, a door of guidance is opened to the followers of Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam,* and the special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* are taught the lesson of reliance on Him.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 38.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 39.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the divine wisdom as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It is indeed a powerful bounty on the followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer us with the quality of reliance on Him alone. Āmīn. (compiler)

Man is more in need of sustenance and children. His need for sustenance is obvious because it is the means for his existence. He needs children because they are the means for the continuity of his progeny. This is why people are always striving for these two. Look around you and you will find some people worried about seeking sustenance while others are concerned about getting children. Man will employ various means to acquire these. He will bear the hardships and difficulties which he has to face in his quest. Allāh *taʿālā* convinced His special servants completely by relating these incidents. This is why we see the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* shifting their gaze away from the causes and focusing on Allāh *taʿālā* alone, the Creator of the causes. Since Allāh *taʿālā* related incidents of this nature, their conviction has become stronger. They believe, without any doubt, that just as the all-powerful Allāh lays down the system of cause and effect, He can also fulfil the needs of His special servants without any causes. After all, the need for causes is a quality in man; not in Allāh *taʿālā*. If He wills, He can create the means and causes from unfavourable situations. And if He wills, He can confer bounties without any means. This is the general treatment of Allāh *taʿālā* with the masses. That is, He enables them to realize their objectives through causes and means. As for His special servants – the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and auliyā' – He sometimes gives them without external means.

This is borne out in the incidents related previously. Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* received non-seasonal fruits and Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* received a son in old age. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

From this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām*, an entire chapter of knowledge opened up to me. A scholar had asked me about a certain couplet in the *Mathnawī*:

> Remaining in the services of the Ahlullāh
> for a short while is better than 100 years
> of sincere worship.

The scholar asked me: "Is there any basis for this statement in the Qur'ān and Sunnat?" Then he himself said that the following verse could be a basis for it:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصَّادِقِيْنَ

O believers! Fear Allāh and remain with the truthful ones.

I said to him: "This verse can be a basis for it." However, the thought came to my mind that this verse only encourages being the company of the truthful ones. As for it being superior to 100 years of worship, that does not seem to be proven from this verse. On the other hand, this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* could become a basis for it. Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* enjoyed the company of Hadrat Maryam for a short while. On seeing the un-seasonal fruit with her and hearing her statement:

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

He developed a certain spiritual condition within himself which prompted him to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for a child. He then supplicated in utmost earnestness and humility to Allāh *taʿālā*, and turned to Him with such dedication that his supplication was accepted there and then. It was this short time of companionship which is superior to 100 years of worship.

Note: We learn from this that sometimes seniors also derive benefit from juniors as was the case with Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* who was a Prophet and Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* who was not a Prophet but a pious woman. Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhas salām* developed that special level of reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* from her company. "Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit."

From this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* we learn the lesson that causes in themselves are not the doers; Allāh *taʿālā* is the real doer. And He is not dependent on causes. He brings into existence through causes and without them as well, because He has the power to do it. The cause and the effect are the same to the Being who has the power to create causes.

(10)

Another point which we learn from this incident is that duʿā' is a major means of acquiring an objective. Let me relate an incident in this regard from the *Mathnawī*:

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* was accepted as a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā* by all – the intelligent and the foolish ones. There was a man in his time who was

making this supplication: “O Allāh! Give me wealth and treasures without having to do any work.” He would also say: “O Allāh! You created me lazy and lethargic, so provide me with sustenance through the path of laziness [I must not need to do any work]. I ask You for sustenance which comes to me without any toiling. I have no one to beg to apart from You, nor can I make any other effort.”

The man continued supplicating in this way by day and night for a considerable number of days, and people laughed and mocked at his persistence and “futile” hopes. This is because their gaze was confined to the physical and material means. They believed that sustenance can only be acquired through striving and hard work, while this man was hoping for sustenance in an extraordinary manner. He will not obtain it, and if he does, it will be most astonishing. He is so foolish that he wants sustenance without any effort. He wants to make a profit without engaging in any trade. No one ever received wealth in this way. How can it be possible unless a person climbs up to the heavens? If a person wants to achieve something, he will have to follow the means for it.

The man did not decrease his supplication just because of the taunts and jeers of the people. Instead, he continued beseeching Allāh *taʿālā* for sustenance without having to work for it. Allāh *taʿālā* who is the helper and supporter of all eventually accepted his supplication. A person assuredly realizes his objective if he has a true and genuine quest. The man saw a cow approaching his house. He shut the door of his house, broke the cow’s horns and slaughtered it without any pause or hesitation.

When the owner of the cow saw this, he went to him and said: “Hey you wretched fellow, you made my cow a target of your oppression! Tell me, why did you slaughter my cow? You are a fool and a thief. I want justice for Allāh’s sake.” The man replied: “I had been asking Allāh for sustenance since quite some time. My supplication has been answered. This cow was the sustenance which I had asked for, so I slaughtered it. This is the only answer I have for you.” The owner went into a rage, caught him by his collar, and gave him a few hard slaps on his face. He then dragged him and took him to H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* while saying to the man: “Move, you foolish and brainless fellow. Allāh’s Prophet will pass a decision on you.”

H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* emerged from his house and when he saw these two, he asked: “What is the matter?” The owner of the cow said: “O Prophet of Allāh! The story is that my cow went to his house and he slaughtered it. He ought to be asked why he did this and what was he thinking when he did it.” H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* turned to the man and asked: “Why did you lay your hand on the property of someone else?” The man replied: “O Prophet of Allāh! I have been begging and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā* for the last seven years to give me sustenance without having to work for it. After supplicating to Him for so long, this cow suddenly came to my house. I was stupefied when I set eyes on it. Not because I received sustenance but out of joy over the acceptance of my supplication. My despondency turned to hope. I slaughtered it as an expression of thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* for having accepted my supplication.”

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Leave all your stories and expressions of your piety, and present a Sharʿī proof for your action. Do you want me to pass a verdict without your presenting a proof from the Sharīʿat and to introduce an evil way in the Sharīʿat in this way? Tell me, did anyone give this cow to you, did you buy it from anyone or did you receive it as inheritance? How did you become its owner? A farmer becomes owner of a piece of land when he buys it from someone. Return the property which you took. Do not make up stories. If you do not have it with you, take a loan and fulfil his due. Do not dilly dally." The man said: "I never thought you will say the same things which people say to me when they mock at me." He then sighed deeply, fell into prostration and addressed Allāh: "O the Sustainer of the world! O the one who knows those who are in pain. Make the facts clear to Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*." After saying this, he began crying and wailing. Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* was trembled when he heard his crying. He addressed the claimant saying: "Give me some time. Hold on with your claims so that I may perform salāh in solitude and learn the truth from the One who knows all secrets." Saying this, he stopped talking, directed his attention to his heart, and proceeded to his place of seclusion.

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* shut the door after reaching his secluded room and became engrossed in supplication. Allāh *taʿālā* informed him of everything related to the story, and apprised him of the criminal and the punishment for the crime. In this way, he came to know of things which no one else had knowledge of and he was left astounded.

Everyone assembled before Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* the next day. They stood in rows and waited

for his verdict. Just then, the same claimant addressed the youngster saying: “O you useless fellow! Give me back my cow immediately. If you cannot feel shame towards your fellow humans you should at least feel shame before Allāh *taʿālā*.” The verdict of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* had changed. He addressed the claimant: “Remain silent. Don’t you dare utter another word. Relinquish your claims and give the cow to your fellow Muslim. I will tell you just this much: Since Allāh *taʿālā* has covered you, you should express thanks to Him and let the matter lie. I advise you that if you desire your own good, you should relinquish your claim. If you are going to demand it, you will suffer the loss.”

When the owner of the cow heard these words of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*, he began wailing and complaining even more, and said: “What type of verdict is this? Where is the justice? Have you made up a new Sharīʿat for me? Your justice is well-known throughout the world. In fact, the earth and the heavens are perfumed by it. How is it that you are issuing such an unjust verdict against me? You are a Prophet of Allāh. For Allāh’s sake, do not say such a thing.”

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* replied: “O you ignorant fellow! Are you attributing injustice to me? Very well, if you really want a fair verdict from me then listen. Bring all your wealth and possessions, and hand them over to this youngster.” The owner of the cow became even more distressed when he heard this. He began throwing dust on his head and tearing his clothes [to express his disgust], and said: “You are continuing to add injustices against me.”

The terrible condition of irreligious people

Did you see! This is what you call a real thief. He himself was a criminal and was fully aware of his own condition. Yet when the verdict went against him, he was prepared to dispute with a Prophet of Allāh. He labelled his verdict as unjust and started demanding justice from him. This is the norm with those who are on falsehood. They have no confidence in a saint, a scholar, and even in Allāh and the Messenger. Instead, they are slaves of their own objectives. The moment they face something against their whims and desires, they succumb to the demands of their carnal self and then utter whatever comes onto their tongues. They were already unfaithful in their hearts. Now they do not desist from hurting the proponents of the truth with their tongues. You have observed this in the above story. When the verdict went against him, he began speaking ill of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām.*

An incident related to the distribution of Hadrat ʿAlī

An incident of this nature occurred during the caliphate of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu.* Two persons were on a journey. They stopped on the way for a meal. One man had five rotīs while the other had three. Just then another traveller arrived so they seated him with them. All three partook of the meal. When the third person was about to leave, he gave them eight dirhams and said: "This is in return for what I ate." Saying this, he continued on his way. The two argued about the distribution of the dirhams. The one who had five rotīs said: "I will take five dirhams and you can take the remaining three." The one with the three rotīs said: "We ought to divide the money equally."

They presented their case to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He said to the one with three rotīs: “You should accept the three dirhams which your companion is giving to you. He had more rotīs while you had fewer. How, then, can there be equality in the money?” The man said: “By Allāh I will never accept this verdict. You will have to give me my share in full.” Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: “I see. Are you saying that I passed an unjust verdict and that I trampled on your rights? Very well, if you really want justice then you will receive just one dirham while your companion will receive seven.” The man said: “Glory to Allāh! How can this be? Explain it to me so that I can accept it on the basis of proof.”

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: “Listen! You were three people while there were eight rotīs. Since they cannot be divided equally, let’s assume eat rotī had three pieces. This will total 24 pieces. We do not know for sure who ate more and who ate less. We will therefore have to assume that you all ate an equal amount. Your three rotīs make up a total of nine pieces of which you ate eight. One piece remained from it. Your companion ate eight pieces of his fifteen pieces, and seven pieces remained. The third person ate your one piece and seven pieces of your companion’s. For your one piece you will obviously receive one dirham while your companion will receive seven dirhams for his seven pieces. If you really want a verdict based on absolute justice, then this is it. The man had to accept the verdict and bear his loss.

I related this verdict of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* while speaking on the point that this is how those who are on falsehood behave. In other words, they cannot understand the truth and the right thing unless they are totally humiliated in public. This is

what the man with three rotīs did, and so did the claimant in the time of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām.*

Speaking of the verdict and sharp mind of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, I recall another incident where he solved a complex issue in a few seconds. We can gauge the expertise of our pious predecessors from it. They surpassed everyone in worldly matters as well by virtue of their religiosity and genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā.*

The sharp wit of Hadrat ʿAlī

Three men came to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "We are co-owners of seventeen camels and would like to distribute them among ourselves. Our partnership is as follows: One person's share is half, the second person's share is one third, and the third person's share is one ninth. How will the seventeen camels be distributed among us because there is a fraction in each one's share? We request you to pass a verdict." Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* instructed his attendant to bring one camel from his camel-shed. They now had eighteen camels. He said to the person whose share was half: "Take nine camels. Bear in mind that you are receiving more than what you ought to receive because you ought to have received half of seventeen but I am giving you half of eighteen." He said to the person whose share was one third: "Take six camels. This is also slightly more than what you ought to receive." He said to the one whose share was one ninth: "One ninth of eighteen is two. And this is also slightly more than one ninth of seventeen. So take two camels."

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* then addressed all three: "The nine, six and two camels total seventeen

camels as per your shares." He then said to his attendant: "Take my remaining one camel and return it to the camel-shed."

Glory to Allāh! Marvel at his intelligence and knowledge! We are left astounded. Look at how quickly he solved such a difficult problem. This was solely the help of Allāh *taʿālā* which always accompanies His righteous servants. This world is quite strange. People witness incidents of this nature but very few believe them. They think that the Ahlullāh are just like them. This is why they doubt incidents of this nature and treat them with suspicion. In fact, sometimes they will even make verbal statements against them as was the case with the claimant when he heard the verdict of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*.

Criticising Hadrat Dāwūd ﷺ

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes further on:

The man continued criticising Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* for some time. The latter then called him forward and said: "O you wretched fellow! You have always been wretched, this is why your wrongdoing is gradually coming out into the open. Get away from here and listen carefully: 'Your wife and your children have all come under the ownership of this youngster and are now his slaves. Do not say anything further.' The man lost his mind when he heard this verdict. He picked up two rocks and began striking his chest. In his ignorance, he ran around in circles. The people too began castigating him when they learnt the facts. They did not know his internal condition before this.

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* finally said: "O people! The time has come for me to bring the secret into the

open. Listen! There is a huge mango tree in such and such forest. It has intertwining branches and a dense growth of leaves which makes the tree appear like a tent. The tree trunk is like a centre-peg of a tent. I am getting the smell of blood from the roots of that tree. Blood has been concealed in the roots of that beautiful and dense tree. This wretched fellow murdered his master and buried him there. He then seized his master's wealth whereas he was his slave. This youngster is the son of the murdered man. He was a small child at the time when the murder was committed, so he does not know what happened. Allāh *taʿālā*, out of His forbearance, had concealed his crime up to now. However, the ingratitude of this shameless fellow caused him to be exposed and humiliated. This disloyal slave did not bother in the least about the wife and family of his master. He neither met him on days of joy nor received him warmly on the days of ʿīd."

Allāh's forbearance conceals many of man's sins. But when a person transgresses the limits, Allāh *taʿālā* disgraces him. Now that the man's secret was exposed, his crime brought into the open and the miracle of H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* displayed before the entire creation, the very same people who did not know the facts and were therefore having doubts about the justice of H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* ran towards H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* and fell at his feet. They acknowledged: "We are blind as regards our own selves. Previously, we did not listen with confidence to whatever you said. Although we witnessed countless miracles at your hands, we did not have proper insight. We ask you to excuse us."

The wrongdoer was killed while an entire world was given life. In other words, those who were eligible for

their rights had their rights fulfilled. Each person set right his īmān, repented over his sins and became a true servant of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The carnal self has murdered the soul

After relating this story, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* presents its moral. He writes:

This is exactly the condition of your carnal self. It was essentially the slave of the soul, but it killed your soul and became its own boss. All this corruption and evil has spread because of it. You should kill your carnal self so that the entire world comes to life. Because this hypocrite murdered its master – the soul – the punishment will be that you will have to make the carnal self the slave of your soul.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the admonitory moral which Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* extracted from this story. He was a master in this field. He was able to explain intricate and complex matters on Sufism through stories and anecdotes. The carnal self is certainly the worst enemy of man on the path to Allāh *taʿālā*. A Hadīth states:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك.[١]

Your bitterest enemy is your carnal self.

This is why it is so important to rectify it.

The Qur'ān refers to the self as *ammārah bi as-sū'*.

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[1]

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الالباس: ج ١، ص ١٢٨.

However, when man strives to rectify it through Allāh's grace and inspiration, he sees the evils which it contains. He may not be able to remove his evils at once due to his mischief and engrossment with evil pleasures, there will come a time when he will feel an aversion towards evils. Although this is not the ideal, because it is a prelude to excellence and perfection, it is desirable and praiseworthy. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* took an oath by this type of the self when He said:

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ.

I take an oath by the day of Resurrection. I take an oath by the self which reproaches at evil.[2]

This is also the natural sequence of training: Man must first clear his mind. His beliefs are then rectified. He sees the good for what it is and evil for what it is. He then acts on the demands of good. After a long period of striving, the "reproaching self" becomes the self which has acquired tranquillity regarding which Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً. فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ.

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you. Join, then, My servants and enter My Paradise.[3]

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

[2] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 1-2.

[3] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-30.

Duʿā’ – an important way to purify the self

We conclude from the above discussion that the self is one, but it goes through different changes. The self which teaches evil progresses and becomes a self which reprimands and reproaches. It progresses further and becomes the self which has acquired tranquillity. The means for acquiring this is striving and spiritual exercises. However, there is one important means which is generally not acknowledged as a means, and that is duʿā’. This is more so when it is accompanied by a special condition. You must have observed it when I related the story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* to you. When Allāh *taʿālā* said:

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ

It was at this point that Zakarīyyā supplicated to his Sustainer.

This is what I want to direct your attention to. Do not consider duʿā’ to be insignificant. The greatest feats of Muslims in every era were achieved through duʿā’, and will continue to do so in the future.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* all the time. He used to beseech Him with utmost servitude and submission. The scholars compiled his supplications in books and separated them into chapters. It is the responsibility of the followers of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to learn and memorize them. I am quoting a duʿā’ which supports the point which I am emphasising, viz. duʿā’ is an important means towards the rectification and purification of the self. There can be no one who could surpass Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in spiritual exercises and striving.

Despite this, he made this supplication to Allāh *taʿālā*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

It therefore becomes a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. That is, do not look at your own striving and spiritual exercises. Instead, seek Allāh's help and support. Say to Him: "O Allāh! If You shower Your kindness to this self and purify it, it will be purified. If not, it will destroy me in its mischief and evil plotting."

The gnosticism of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is displayed when he turned to Allāh *taʿālā* in the matter of the self and taught the same to his followers. We can never consider ourselves to be independent as regards the rectification and purification of the self. Rather, even with our striving and efforts, we must turn to Allāh *taʿālā*. If not, we will never be able to gain control over it.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how easy Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this difficult thing for us.

Note: This is an immensely important and beneficial theme which was excellently explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslim community to understand it and practise on it. It is especially important for the associates of Hadrat Muslihul

Ummat *raẖimahullāh* to practise on it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE OBLIGATORY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ʿULAMĀ’

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says in *Tafhīmāt* that it was the will of Allāh *taʿālā* that the scholars should maintain and strive for that light which is derived from the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, to proliferate it, and to encourage the hearts to acquire guidance through it. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

فَلَوْ لاَ نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ.

Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that they may acquire an understanding of religion.[1]

وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبّٰنِيّٖنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ.

Rather, he will say: "You become the men of Allāh as you used to teach the Book and just as you yourself used to study it."[2]

The system of appointing caliphs, and sending inviters and propagators has been coming down from generation to generation. The scholars did this to elevate Allāh's word and so that the promise of Allāh *taʿālā* contained in the following verse may be fulfilled:

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ.

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1 Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

2 Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 79.

It is We Ourselves who revealed this admonition and We are its protectors.[1]

Look! Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that when Allāh *taʿālā* willed for the ʿulamā' of this ummat to strive to maintain the light which is derived from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the ʿulamā' made it a point to inherit it from generation to generation through the appointment of khulafā'. In other words, they thought that as long as they are present, they will carry out this task and continue conveying this light to the people. At the same time, there will have to be someone to continue the work after them. This is why they appointed a khalīfah.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says further that the promise which is contained in the words:

وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحَافِظُوْنَ

We are its protectors.

Was fulfilled through the ʿulamā'. Real internal protection is done by Allāh *taʿālā*, while the ʿulamā' have been made the means for the external protection. People in every era will be born who will be appointed to the responsibility of preserving the Sharīʿat and this light. Just imagine the honour which these ʿulamā' enjoy that this divine promise of protection and preservation is being fulfilled at their hands. This is why the ʿulamā' of this ummat will be standing in the row of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Note: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets. Just as

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[1] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 9.

the ʿulamā’ are the partners of the Prophets in this work in this world, they will be their partners in the reward and honour in the Hereafter. The ʿulamā’ ought to take solace from this and fulfil the legacy of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the most perfect manner so that they can have the honour of success in the Hereafter. (compiler)

The travelling principles of Hadrat Thānwī

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say:

If the ʿulamā’ of today apply the travelling principles of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* which he himself adhered to strictly, their respect and dignity will be established and their honour will increase in the hearts of the masses.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was in the practice of going for a walk in the morning. If he travelled to any place, he maintained this practice and would read the Qur’ān while walking. He used to inform his host: “I do not have breakfast nor am I in the habit of tea.” The host had to make arrangements for lunch and supper only; not for breakfast. This provided immense ease to the host. If Hadrat *rahimahullāh* had companions who accompanied him, he would clearly inform his host by saying: “These are the number of companions for whom you will have to arrange meals. The remaining companions will make their own arrangements.” If the host wanted, he would invite some of them on his own, or else they would make their own arrangements.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was fastidious in matters related to food and drink, and especially transparent in money matters. He paid particular attention to them and taught people about them with

special emphasis. Those who learnt these lessons from him are accepted and valued by people wherever they are.

No person's wealth is lawful unless given with an open heart

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "No person's wealth is lawful unless it is given with an open heart." He did not approve of his people being made hangers-on. In other words, he is made the objective of an invitation while his companions are treated as hangers-on and parasites.

If anyone invited him, he would say: "Go to each one of those whom you intend inviting and extend your invitation to them. If they accept, well and good." Those who were invited would then go to Hadrat and seek his permission. He used to say: "I do not want to stop anyone from the food. Rather, I want their respect and dignity to be maintained."

The following story is related in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah*:

A man invited a certain saint. The host said to him: "You may bring all the other poor people who are with you." They proceeded for the invitation. There was a green-grocer along the way. He began screaming and saying: "One of them owes me so much of money and is not paying me. These people are like this and like that." He began hurling abuses at them. The saint was quite saddened. On reaching the house of the host, he said to him: "I am distressed. Try and remove it, only then will I be able to eat. I need this amount of money." The host was a devoted man. He gave his key to his safe and said: "You may take out as much as you want." He took 300 rupees, gave the money to one of his disciples

and instructed him to take it to the green-grocer and say to him: "One of my associates owes you some money. I am giving you this money as payment." The disciple did as told. Once the saint and his associates had their meal, they went back. On the way, they passed the green-grocer. He pointed at them and said to those who were around him: "O people! Look! These are real saints and pious people. They are trustworthy people. They are the genuine dervishes. These are the men of Allāh."

Did you see! Just now he was hurling abuses at them but once he got his money, he began showering praises on them. This is the condition of worldly people.

Listen! If Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* did not write these points, we would not understand them. There is the story of a certain chief who heard that the son of a saint is due to arrive soon. When he heard of his arrival, he got up from his place and said: "The thief is coming to carry out his thieving." He then went to him and met him with utmost warmth. He kissed his hand, gave him some money, brought him to his house, seated him and served him breakfast. When he was leaving, he accompanied him for some distance. When the chief came back to his house, he said: "The thief came, did his thieving and left." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā.*

A man had heard both statements and observed the manner in which the chief treated the saint's son. He asked him: "If you have no faith in him, why did you extend so much of respect to him? And why did you give him money?" The chief replied: "I have been observing this practice in my family from the time of my father and grandfather, so I am continuing with it."

When I heard this, I expressed my utmost disapproval and thought to myself that this is certainly hypocrisy.

An ʿālim who was the most senior teacher in a certain madrasah came to meet Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. When the ʿālim decided to stay over in the khānqāh, Hadrat said to one of his attendants: "The ʿālim's food will be provided from my house. When the food arrives, you must go and serve it to him." The food was brought to him and he began eating. Just then another man entered, so the ʿālim asked him to join in the meal. The attendant said: "Hadrat, this is not permissible." The ʿālim said: "It is permissible." The attendant went and informed Hadrat Thānwī saying: "Hadrat, I took the food from your house and was serving it to that ʿālim, and he invited another person to join him in the meal. I said to him that this is not permissible, but he said that it is permissible."

When Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* heard this, he said: "Go and tell him that it is not permissible because the food that is served to him is not given over in his ownership (*tamlīk*). Its use has been made permissible for him (this is called *ibāhat*). There is a difference between the two. When an item is given over in the ownership of someone, he has the right to do as he wills with it, and he can give it to whomever he wants. On the other hand, in *ibāhat*, a person is permitted to use the item as much as he wants, but he does not have the right to give it to anyone else."

We learnt these points when we were in the company of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. It was the place where knowledge used to glitter and shine, and where we learnt social etiquette.

USEFUL PIECES OF ADVICE

The brother of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Shāh Ahlullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* offers many pieces of advice in his book *Chār Bāb*. A few are quoted below:

(1)

When faced with an important matter, consult the intelligent and wise well-wishers who are experts in that field. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* instructed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to consult with the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. This is actually an instruction to his followers to consult in all matters.

(2)

Follow the ways of the noble and righteous people in whatever you do. Stay away from the company of ignoble people. The type of people whose company you choose will definitely have an effect on you. If you remain in the company of ignoble people and those of the lower strata of society, your temperament will imbibe and absorb their qualities. You should therefore remain aloof from such people.

(3)

Do not be hasty in any Dīnī matter, and do not do any work without consultation and planning.

(4)

Do not allow yourself to be useless and idle. Instead, do works for the Hereafter. If you cannot do that, do not let an opportunity to pass in doing worldly works. For example, learn some type of craft or skill through which you could acquire of this world.

I quote a statement of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which supports the above piece of advice of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. ʿAllāmah ʿAlī Fikrī quoted it in his book *as-Samīr al-Muhadhdhab*:

قال عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه إني لأكره أن أرى أحدكم سبهللًا لا في عمل الدنيا ولا في عمل الآخرة.

I dislike seeing any of you idle – neither doing any worldly work nor occupied in any action of the Hereafter.

The training of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

I always tell you that if you have no interest in doing any work of the Hereafter, you should at least occupy yourself in worldly occupations. Man has to do something or the other. Unfortunately I see you doing nothing for the Hereafter nor occupying yourself in any worldly activities.

When we speak to people about these things, they abhor our own presence and existence among them. Through their actions and attitude they are actually saying: "If this person was not around, we would have made tremendous progress." I reply to such people, very well, we will move aside. Do something and show us, but you will not be able to do anything because let alone being able to do anything, you do not even have the intelligence to understand anything. The general condition which I observe in you is that you will do nothing yourself, but if one person in your family works hard and earns something, you will fight with him and want to take his earnings by force. You then leave him distressed. You do nothing and you don't allow others to do anything.

The deplorability of idleness

Listen! I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. There was a man sitting quietly in one place. A saint was walking pass but he did not offer salām to the man and continued on his way. When the saint was returning and walked pass the man again, he offered him salām. Someone asked the saint: "Hadrat, what is the matter? When you passed by this man the first time, you did not offer him salām, but you did on your return!?" The saint replied: "When I passed by him the first time, he was sitting idle, doing nothing. He was therefore closer to Shaytān. On my return, I saw him marking the ground with his hand. Although this action is futile, he became distant from Shaytān because he was now occupied in something."

We learn from this that no matter what work a person is occupied in – whether Dīnī or worldly – he will stay away from Shaytān. But if he remains idle and inactive, he will be subjugated by Shaytān. This is why Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

> Do not allow yourself to be useless and idle. Instead, do works for the Hereafter. If you cannot do that, do not let an opportunity to pass in doing worldly works.

And Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said:

> I dislike seeing any of you idle – neither doing any worldly work nor occupied in any action of the Hereafter.

Those who are occupied in some work – whether Dīnī or worldly – are safeguarded against temptation and corruption. Because they are occupied, they do not have the time to fall in futile activities.

There was a youngster here who was studying English. He is now gone to Europe. On going there, he kept a beard and began performing salāh regularly. He was also punctual with tahajjud and ishrāq salāh, and encouraged others towards Dīn. He is employed there and receives a monthly wage of 10 000. He wrote to his father: "Ensure you educate all the boys in Dīnī knowledge. Leave them in the service of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib in Allāhābād, and make arrangements for their education and training."

We observe from this that there are people who, despite going to Europe and living among the Europeans, are preserving Dīn. If this is the case, there is no harm in a person going to America, London or anywhere else. As long as īmān is with him, it will protect him wherever he goes.

I related this while speaking on the point that everyone is doing some work or the other, why can't you do something? You have hands and feet just as others do. Everyone is progressing, why can't you? When a person gives preference to Dīn, money is an aid to him. We cannot say it is unlawful. In fact, this world is necessary to a certain extent and one has to do something in it. He has to have wealth as well. There are Ahādīth in this regard.

Leaving your heirs wealthy

Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates: The Messenger of Allāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came to visit me in the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage because of an illness which became very serious. I said: "O Messenger of Allāh! You can see the severity of the illness that has befallen me. I am a wealthy person with no one to inherit from me except a

daughter. Should I give two thirds of my wealth in charity?" He replied: "No." I asked: "Should I give half, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied: "No." I asked: "Should I give one third, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied: "Give one third; and even one third is a lot. It is better for you to leave your heirs wealthy than leaving them poor, begging from people. You will most certainly be rewarded for whatever you spend solely for the pleasure of Allāh. So much so that you will be rewarded for [the morsel which] you place in your wife's mouth."[1]

Look! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited him from bequesting even half of his wealth. The reason he explained is that it is better to leave one's dependents wealthy than leaving them paupers so that they are saved from the humiliation of going around begging from people.

This instruction of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was from among the information of the unseen. Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* did not pass away in this illness. Instead, he recovered and Allāh *taʿālā* blessed him with about ten sons and twelve daughters. Imagine what would have happened to these children had he given away all his wealth in charity.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* permitted Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to make a bequest for one third of his estate. At the same time, he added, "one third is a lot". The jurists conclude from this that it is better to make a bequest of less than one third; and not a full one third.

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[1] *Sahīh Bukhārī* (1295). *Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Wasīyyah* (5).

In this <u>H</u>adīth Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches the ummat to leave their children wealthy. The ʿulamā’ say that the īmān of the person who has no wealth is not safe. In other words, in the absence of wealth, a person sometimes loses his īmān as well.

The advice of Sufyān Thaurī

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Sufyān Thaurī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* was a wealthy man and also a Sufi. He said:

عن سفيان الثوري قال كان المال فيما مضى يكره، فأما اليوم فهو ترس المؤمن. وقال لو لا هذه الدنانير لتمندل بنا هؤلاء الملوك. وقال من كان في يده من هذه شيء فليصلحه فإنه زمان إن احتاج كان أول ما يبذل دينه. وقال الحلال لا يحتمل السرف.[١]

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Sufyān Thaurī ra<u>h</u>imahullāh said: "Wealth was disapproved in the past. But today it is a shield (through which a person can be saved from many calamities and can maintain his dignity)." He said: "If we didn't have money, these kings would have put an end to us." (We would have been humiliated by them). He said: "If a person has any wealth, he must maintain it (he must not destroy it; he must invest it) because this is a time of (such irreligiousness that) if a person falls into need, he will sell his Dīn first." He said: "Lawful wealth does not hold the possibility of extravagance." (In other words, a special feature of lawful wealth is that it is not wasted and not spent without a Shariʿī need).

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[1] رواه في شرح السنة.

The safety of īmān lies in wealth

We learn from this that we should not vie with those who belonged to the best of eras [the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*] because they were perfect in īmān. It was an era of goodness and righteousness. That no longer exists. The condition of people has changed. Their īmān has become weak and they cannot bear poverty. The safety of Dīn and īmān lies in having some wealth. If not, people will lose their īmān.

Brothers, listen! It is an accepted fact that the needs of the Hereafter take precedence over the needs of this world. And that the Hereafter is given preference over this world. However, what I want to show to you is that this world is also needed to a certain extent. It is one of the issues of our life and is needed to maintain our honour and dignity. We must not need to extend a begging hand before anyone. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* is saying with reference to his time that if we did not have wealth, the wealthy would have wiped us out. What, then, can be said of the condition of the wealthy of our time. It is a great favour of our pious predecessors for having solved this issue and cleared the path for us. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Although people are frequenting the saints they are not benefiting from them because they neither possess knowledge nor wisdom. And so, they cannot understand what is said to them. All you people can do is when I speak, you start noting it down. I say, first understand what I say and then note it down. Yesterday I had quoted this Hadīth to you:

خِيَارُكُمْ مَنْ ذَكَّرَكُمْ بِاللهِ رُؤْيَتُهُ، وَزَادَ فِيْ عِلْمِكُمْ مَنْطِقُهُ، وَرَغَّبَكُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَمَلُهُ.[1]

The best of you is the one who when you look at him, he reminds you of Allāh taʿālā, his speech increases you in knowledge and his actions create a yearning for the Hereafter.

This Hadīth states that from among the many qualities of the best of people there is one specific quality, viz. his speech increases your knowledge. This proves the virtue of knowledge. The fact of the matter is that knowledge is required everywhere. Do you think the true religion will not require it?

When the principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband used to issue certificates to graduating students, he used to apply this rule: If he found that a student had weak capabilities and was not suited to teaching, he would write the word "sālih" (righteous) in his certificate. As for the student whom he considered to be

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٣، ص ٤٦٧.

knowledgeable and of sound capabilities, he would write the words "wa huwa qādir ʿalā ad-dars wa at-tadrīs" (he has the ability to teach).

Now look! To whom did he accord a higher level? Obviously to the one whose intelligence and capabilities he attested to. After all, that [dār al-ʿulūm] is a place of knowledge. The principal will therefore consider the one who has acquired knowledge to be of real worth. As for the word "s̠āli̠h", it makes reference to his piety but not to his knowledge. He is therefore not suitable as a teacher.

Listen! The entire system has become spoilt and corrupted when those who are occupied in the teaching field pay no attention to knowledge nor do they acquire it. Yet they are the means for doing the work. It is as though they have no hands and legs. If the hands and legs are paralysed, how can any work be done? Many people went to H̠ad̠rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *ra̠himahullāh*. They learnt nothing there nor are they prepared to learn anything here. Now you tell me. H̠ad̠rat Maulānā *ra̠himahullāh* was such an eminent scholar, yet how many people learnt from him? Many people learnt actions, but only a handful were able to take and convey his knowledge. The fact of the matter is that knowledge is difficult while actions are easy. This is why people opt for actions and shy away from knowledge.

Students need spiritual practices

There are students in this assembly. I will therefore say something which will be of worth to them. Listen attentively.

Our seniors did not approve of students pledging bayʿat and occupying themselves in spiritual practices in their student days. They believed that

spiritual practices were not only distracting to their academic activities, but harmful and a cause of disorder. This is why when any student requested a shaykh to accept his bayʿat, he would reprimand him. He would also disallow him from dhikr and other spiritual practices. He would say to him: “This is the time to acquire knowledge; acquire it first. Your desire for bayʿat are satanic whisperings which want to divert you from your studies.”

The opinion of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

We fully accept the above attitude of our seniors. They frankly stated what came to their mind based on their knowledge, integrity and experience. This attitude was most appropriate for their times. Nonetheless, after observing our present conditions and experiences in our Dīnī institutes and madāris, my view on this matter has changed. I now state with full insight that this approach is not beneficial at present. Instead, it is extremely harmful.

People in those days possessed Dīn and religiosity. Students used to learn a major portion of Dīn and character in their houses and then come to the madāris. They had full esteem for Dīn and people of Dīn in their hearts. They would therefore acquire knowledge alone from the madrasah. They did not think of any other path. Their closeness to their teachers who themselves possessed external and internal excellences was enough to prompt them towards action and sincerity. They had full reverence for Dīn and the salient features of Dīn. The sanctity of the Qur’ān and Sunnat was deeply embedded in their hearts. This is why their hearts were not empty of love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Consequently their preoccupation with knowledge did not harm them. After completing

their studies, they would remain in the company of the Sufis and enlighten their hearts with sound character within a short period of time. They would be embellished with action and sincerity which is the soul of knowledge, fill their hearts with love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, imbibe external and internal excellences, and attach themselves to their respective works. This was the norm in the past.

These conditions no longer exist. This era is filled with corruption. Atheism has become common. This has not only affected our homes and environments, rather, the places which were established for rectification were also affected negatively. In addition to not practising on the Sufi way, the situation has deteriorated to its rejection. Consequently, the madāris and khānqāhs are at loggerheads. There is a detachment between the ʿulamā' of the external sciences and the Sufis. Previously one was a stepping stone for the next. Once a person completed his studies in a madrasah, he would proceed to a khānqāh. But now they have become opponents of each other. If there is knowledge in the madāris, there is no sign of sound character in them. If there are some vestiges of dhikr and spiritual practices in the khānqāhs, there is no indication of knowledge in them.

Now that the situation has deteriorated to such an extent, I ask you, under what hopes are the students in the madāris stopped from pursuing spiritual excellence? When the fire of immorality and rejection has spread to the homes, madāris and environment, if we do not turn their focus towards the spiritual side, do you think they will accept the rectification of any shaykh after having spent 10-15 years in a

madrasah? Obviously not. They will be deprived of knowledge because their free-loving attitude kept them away from it. They will also remain deprived of sound character and sincerity – in fact, of Dīn and īmān – because you did not permit them to acquire it in the prescribed manner just because it negates their preoccupation with knowledge. The dreadful outcome of this is obvious.

This is why I say – and I say it with full confidence and conviction – that you will have to get the students attached to dhikr and spiritual practices during their student-days as well. Assuming their attention in this direction becomes a bit more and their attention to knowledge gets less, they would have at least acquired religiosity, abstinence, piety and īmān. If they do not become distinguished scholars, they will at least become abstinent and pious believers. If you do not turn their attention to this, they will neither acquire knowledge nor develop piety. Their condition will be appalling and they will be evil examples for our community.

Do not think that because they are studying Dīnī knowledge they will develop piety through it. This is a clear delusion. In the present conditions, the hearts are heedless and Shayṯān has taken full control of them. Knowledge alone is not enough for the cleansing of such a heart. Each task is accomplished in the manner prescribed. And the way to do it is as has been shown by the Sufis in every era, viz. Allāh's remembrance. This is why the scholars have always been in need of the Sufis. If success could be achieved through knowledge alone, all the great scholars would not have gone and presented themselves to the Sufis. Instead, they would have traversed this path through knowledge alone. This is

why I say, no matter how distinguished a scholar may be, he cannot achieve perfection through knowledge only. Nor will he be of any benefit to the Muslim community.

This time is different from that of the Sahābah's. It was only the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* who used to hear just one point from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and their hearts would be filled with īmān. Now it is unavoidable to follow the path of the Sufis to fill the heart with īmān.

It was with this need in mind that the Sufis prescribed a path of their own. They noticed that the time is such that the Qur'ān and Sunnat alone are not enough to remove heedlessness from the heart and develop genuine īmān. These heedlessness-filled hearts first need to be divested of heedlessness. The Sufis therefore prescribed spiritual practices and meditations. They stressed that the rectification of the heart is the core objective. A striking difference between their work and the scholars of the external sciences is that the 'ulamā' who taught in madāris did not necessarily make the hearts of those whom they taught to be in agreement with them. On the other hand, those who were taught by the Sufis were turned into their bosom friends.

Note: Unfortunately there is a retrogression in this field as well. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is speaking about the time before 1386 A.H./1967. There is a vast difference between that time and now. You can see it with your own eyes. (compiler)

You will therefore have to go to the saints to acquire sound character and sincerity, and for the perfection of your īmān and Islam. This work will have to be initiated in the madāris. In other words, you will have to initiate dhikr and spiritual practices. At the same

time, the madrasah is certainly a place for education. Therefore, if you see a student becoming fanatical about other matters, you must explain to him that he must not involve himself in anything which would divert him from the objective for which he left home and came here. It is also not correct to reserve the madrasah exclusively for knowledge to the extent that students do not bother about practising on their knowledge and graduate as rejecters of the Sufi way. This is extremely harmful. If students remain smug with the idea that they will practise later on, they will be deprived of knowledge as well. Correct knowledge is generally not acquired without practice.

There was a Maulānā to whom Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had conferred khilāfah. He was a senior scholar who was also a teacher in a certain madrasah. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* took back the khilāfah from him for some reason. Consequently he could not continue teaching in the madrasah. I say, if Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had not become displeased with him and had he kept Hadrat happy and remained on his path, then at least the associates of Hadrat would have accepted and acknowledged him. If outsiders did not accept him, there would certainly be someone who would. After all, he was a senior man. In this way, he would have had a large following and the madrasah would have remained in his control.

One point came to my mind from this incident. When a person acknowledges and believes in the saints, he experiences worldly benefits as well. But when his head goes off, he cannot differentiate between profit and loss.

Note: Māshā Allāh, this is a very comprehensive topic which ought to be borne in mind by the 'ulamā'.

Students too should tread the path of knowledge and practice in the light of what was said. (compiler)

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE FOR ALLĀH

People began coming to me when I started the work of teaching and training. Many of them used to get angry at me and feel offended. But when they saw that I am successful in my work and that people are accepting me, I began receiving invitations from many places. I received letters from various places informing me that there is a need for the work in their towns and villages, and so, I should come and initiate the work there.

If you see me successful, then it is because of Dīn and imparting correct education and training. Those who are unsuccessful, it is because of a lack of education and training. Total and perfect education and training is found in the Sharīʿat, but you are neither studying it nor are you placing your children in this direction. The consequences of this are before you: your children are not obedient to you, you are doing no Dīnī work nor are you good enough for any worldly work.

I am fully aware of your conditions, this is why I am speaking in this way. The root of all ills is that you have left aside the teachings of the Sharīʿat. From your present attitude it seems that you do not even want to come towards Dīn. How, then, can you succeed?

Look at what Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says, and there is no doubt about the uniqueness of this theme. He writes:

من علم وعمل وعلّم فذلك يدعٰى عظيما في السماوات.[1]

The person who studies, practises and teaches is referred to as a great person in the heavens.

In other words, the angels refer to him as a great person.

He says further that education is not completed without a teacher. At the same time, a student is an instrument for a teacher to fulfil his occupation as a teacher. What this means is that a teacher or mentor acquires expertise in his teaching and mentoring through a student. If a teacher loves his student on the basis that he is the means for his progress and proficiency, his love for the student will be classified as love for Allāh's sake.

In the same way, a person who spends his wealth for Allāh's cause, or invites a few guests and feeds them exotic foods as a way of gaining closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*, and loves his chef because he is skilled in his craft, then this is also love for Allāh's sake.

The love between teacher and student is certainly a love for Allāh's sake. If a chef is loved by his employer because of his skill, it will also be love for Allāh's sake provided the proximity of Allāh *taʿālā* is sought through the preparation of those exotic dishes.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* used to say that if you give exotic foods to your self, then you must also take a lot of work from it.

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[1] ابن عساكر، حديث: ١٧.

We learn from this that exotic and delicious foods are not prohibited to us. Yes, they must be made the means for proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the disparagement over the exotic foods eaten by an unbeliever, this is because he considers these to be the objectives and believes them to be the purpose of his life. On the other hand, we Muslims make them the means to get closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* describes the general condition of people in the following couplet:

> Food is merely for one's survival and for acquiring strength for Allāh's remembrance. But you believe that this life is solely for eating and drinking.

An unbeliever makes it the objective of his life, thereby causing his heedlessness to increase. On the other hand, when a believer uses the bounties of Allāh, he acquires His recognition and his love for Him increases.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says further:

Loving the person who takes the responsibility of conveying charities to those who are eligible for charities is included in love for Allāh's sake. In fact, we can go one step further and say that loving one's attendant who sees to one's needs such as washing one's clothes, cleaning the house, preparing the meals, etc. so that he may free the person for knowledge and practice, then this love for the attendant is also love for Allāh's sake. This is on condition that the attendant's services are taken with the intention of freeing one's self for Allāh's worship.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says:

We go one step further and say that the person who loves a person who spends his wealth on him,

provides him with food, clothing, shelter and all other needs with the purpose of freeing him for knowledge and practice so that he gets closer to Allāh *taʿālā*, then this love is also for Allāh's sake.

Look at what Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* is saying and then check your own condition. You can understand it from the following example:

A person from this region went to a Maulānā and said: "Accept me as your murīd." The Maulānā replied: "Why don't you go and become a murīd of Maulānā Wasīyyullāh? [Referring to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*]. He is around at the moment and many people are reverting to him. Why don't you go to him?" The man replied: "He does not engage in any worldly activity." The Maulānā said: "I see, what did Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* do after he became the caliph? What did Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* do after he became the caliph? They used to receive a stipend from the Islamic Treasury. They were occupied in matters of the Islamic state; where did they have the time to earn a livelihood? This is a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He did this and so did his deputies. Allāh *taʿālā* sees to their needs and makes arrangements for them." The Maulānā added: "Hadrat Maulānā is doing the work of Dīn. If you can, then go and join him just as some people helped Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to carry out their responsibilities."

The affluent see to the needs of the pious

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* continues:

فقد كان جماعة من السلف تكفل بكفايتهم جماعة من ولي الثروة وكان المواسِي والمواسٰى جميعا من المتحابين في الله.

There were some wealthy people who had taken the responsibility of seeing to the needs of the pious predecessors. Both – those who spent their wealth and those on whom the wealth was spent – loved each other for Allāh's sake.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says, we can go one step further and say that the person who marries a righteous woman so that she can be a means of protecting him against satanic whisperings and preserve his Dīn, or marries her so that she can bear him righteous children who will pray for him, and loves his wife because she is the means for realizing his religious objectives, then such a person is a lover for Allāh's sake.

This love is so overwhelming at times that it leaves no share for the self. This means that his heart has nothing apart from love for the beloved. Sometimes he will spend half his wealth for his beloved, sometimes one third, and at other times, one tenth.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* then says:

مقادير الأموال موازين المحبة إذ لا يعرف درجة المحبوب إلا بمحبوب يترك في مقابلته.

The extent of wealth is the scale of love. In other words, the more wealth you spend for the Beloved the more love you will be considered to have. Allāh *ta'ālā* says in this regard:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ

You will never be able to acquire perfection in virtue until you spend something of what you love.[1]

When love encompasses a person's heart, it leaves nothing but the beloved in it. He then leaves nothing for himself. He sacrifices everything for the Beloved. As was the case with Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* – he left neither his wealth nor his children for himself. He gave his daughter, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and spent all his money on him. Glory to Allāh! Look at the love and sacrifice which he demonstrated. Then look at how Allāh *taʿālā* appreciated him by according him a rank which no one else in the ummat can reach.

Hadrat Ibn 'Umar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was sitting with Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. The latter had a cloak wrapped around his chest. Hadrat Jibrā'īl *ʿalayhis salām* came down and conveyed Allāh's salām and said: "O Rasūlullāh! What is the matter with Abū Bakr that he is sitting with a cloak wrapped around his chest?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "He spent all his wealth on me before the Conquest of Makkah, this is why he is in this condition."

Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Convey the salām of Allāh *taʿālā* to him and say, Allāh *taʿālā* asks:

أراض أنت عني في فقرك أم ساخط.

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 92.

Are you happy with Me in this poverty of yours or are you angry at Me?

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* turned to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "Here is Jibra'īl. He conveys Allāh's salām to you and asks on behalf of Allāh if you are happy with Him for your poverty or are you angry at Him?" Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* burst out crying when he heard this message and said: "How can I be displeased with my Allāh!?"

أنا عن ربي راض، أنا عن ربي راض.

I am pleased with my Allāh, I am pleased with my Allāh.

Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "You speak of Hadrat Khadījah a lot whereas Allāh *taʿālā* has given you a wife better than her." She was the daughter of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also loved dearly and intensely. This is why she made this statement. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "No. Allāh *taʿālā* did not give me a wife better than Hadrat Khadījah because when people rejected me, she affirmed me; and when everyone deprived me, she gave me."

The exegists say with reference to the following verse:

ووجدك عائلا فأغنى، أي بمال خديجة.

Allāh found you poor so He made you rich. That is, through the wealth of Khadījah.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā* and one of the characteristics

of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is that they always acknowledge the favours of the creation. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to constantly speak of the favours of Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā.*

I thoroughly enjoy speaking on this topic. You probably enjoy it as well. I came here to Allāhābād to convey some teachings to you. There was no need for me to leave Mumbai and come here. The programme of education and training was quite full there. I had become accustomed to the city and the weather also suited me. The only reason for leaving and coming here is because you have a right over me. I believe it is my responsibility to serve you because I did live here previously and initiated the work here.

Now let me quote a Hadīth to you:

من أخلص لله أربعين صباحا جرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه.[1]

When a person worships Allāh taʿālā devotedly for forty days, springs of wisdom will gush forth from his heart and emanate from his tongue.

A man heard this Hadīth and began occupying himself in worship. He continued for forty days but no springs of wisdom flowed from his heart. He began doubting the Hadīth and asked some ʻulamā' about it. An erudite scholar said to him: "The Hadīth contains the words:

من أخلص لله

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[1] كشف الخفا ومزيل الالباس: ج ٢، ص ٢٠٠.

When a person worships solely for Allāh *taʿālā* [which we translated as "worships Allāh *taʿālā* devotedly"], springs of wisdom will flow from his heart. You worshipped Allāh *taʿālā* for the sake of the springs of wisdom flowing from your heart. Where, then, is the sincerity and devotion?"

The Sufis of the time applauded this answer because the thief was caught out. A person who does anything solely for Allāh *taʿālā* receives plenty from Him. People who follow their desires and have selfish motives cannot acquire perfection; they remain deprived.

I have been speaking on a certain theme for the past several days. I am saying a few words to complete it. Listen attentively. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land (of Egypt).

Look at how his brothers had cast him into a well, We removed him from it, made him a governor of Egypt and gave him such power that:

يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ

He could take possession therein wherever he liked (and lived in whichever place he wanted).

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will.

The author of *Rū<u>h</u> al-Maʿānī* writes:

أي بنعمتنا وعطائنا في الدنيا من الملك والغنى وغيرهما من النعم.

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will by showering Our bounties on him in this world. These include kingdom and affluence.

وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We do not waste the reward of the virtuous.[1]

بل نوفي لهم أجورهم في الدنيا لإحسانهم والمراد به على ما قيل الإيمان والثبات على التقوى.

Instead, We give them their reward in full in this world because of their virtuousness. Virtuousness refers to īmān and firmness on piety.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ

For those who do good in this world, there is goodness for them.

The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* writes:

والمراد بها الصحة والعافية أي للمحسنين صحة وعافية في الدنيا.

Goodness in this world refers to good health and wellbeing. In other words, the doers of good will experience good health and wellbeing in this world.

He writes further:

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

إن للمحسنين جزاء يسيرا في الدنيا هو الصحة والعافية وإنما توفية أجورهم في الآخرة وأرض الله واسعة على هذا أن يكون اعتراضا إزاحة لما قد يختلج في بعض النفوس من ذلك الجزاء بواسطة اختلاف الهواء والتربة غير ذلك مما يؤدي إلى آفات في البدن فقيل وأرض الله واسعة فلا يعدم أحد محلا يناسب حاله فليتحول عنه إليه إن لم يلائمه.[1]

The little reward which the virtuous receive in this world is good health and wellbeing. They will receive their full reward in the Hereafter.

Allāh taʿālā says: "The earth of Allāh is vast." It will be better to consider this sentence to be a parenthetical clause. This is to remove the misgiving some people have about differences in climate and environment causing harm to the body. Allāh taʿālā therefore says "The earth of Allāh is vast." Each person will therefore find a place which is suited to his condition. If he is living in a place which is not conducive to his condition, he must shift to another place.

Hadrat prays for his speeches to spread far and wide

I prayed to Allāh *taʿālā*: O Allāh! If You are pleased with whatever I am saying then convey my talks to distant places. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, they are reaching far off places and people are accepting them. I say to you as well, pay attention and listen

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٢٤٩.

carefully. Understand them and put them into practice.

Now listen to another Hadīth in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited begging and instructed us to work. I will conclude today's topic with this.

عن أنس بن مالك أن رجلا من الأنصار جاء إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يسئله فقال ألك في بيتك شيء، قال بلى، حلس نلبس بعضه ونبسط بعضه وقدح نشرب فيه الماء، قال إيتني بهما، قال فأتاه بهما فأخذهما رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بيده ثم قال من يشتري هذين فقال رجل أنا آخذهما بدرهم، قال من يزيد على درهم مرتين أو ثلاثا، قال رجل أنا آخذهما بدرهمين، فأتاهما إياه وأخذ الدرهمين فأعطاهما الأنصاري وقال إشتر بأحدهما طعاما فانبذه إلى أهلك، واشتر بالآخر قدوما فأتني به، ففعل، فأخذه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فشد فيه عودا بيده، وقال إذهب فاحتطب ولا أراك خمسة عشر يوما. فجعل يحتطب ويبيع، فجاء وقد أصاب عشرة دراهم، فقال اشتر ببعضها طعاما وببعضها ثوبا، قال قال: هذا خير لك من أن تجيء والمسئلة نكتة في وجهك يوم القيامة، إن المسئلة لا تصلح إلا لذي فقر مدفع أو لذي غرم مفظع أو دم موجع.[1]

Hadrat Anas ibn Mālik radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that a man from the Ansār came begging to Rasūlullāh

[1] سنن ابن ماجه: ص ١٥٨.

sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam so he asked him: "Do you have anything in your house?" He replied: "Yes, a saddle blanket part of which we lay on the ground [as a mattress] and part of which we use to cover ourselves [as a duvet]. And a bowl which we use to drink water." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Bring both items to me." The man brought them, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam took them with his hand and announced: "Who will buy these two items from me." One man said: "I will buy them for one dirham." He asked: "Who will offer more?" He asked this question a few times. A man said: "I will buy them for two dirhams." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam gave the items to the buyer, took the two dirhams from him and gave them to the Ansārī man. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then said to him: "Buy food for one dirham and give it to your family. Buy an axe with the other dirham and bring it to me." He did as he was told. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam took it from him, attached a handle to it with his own hands and said: "Go and chop wood. I do not want to see you here for the next fifteen days."

The man began chopping wood and selling it. He came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam after a few days with ten dirhams. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "Buy grain with some of the money and clothing with some of it." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then said: "This is better for you than coming on the day of Resurrection with the blemish of begging on your face. Begging is not good except for a person whose poverty has caused him to fall to the ground, a person who is burdened by heavy debts, or a person who killed another and does not have the means to pay the blood money."

We learn from this Hadīth that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited begging while he encouraged earning a livelihood. Consequently, the Arabs became wealthy and the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* became the most affluent. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* left the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* wealthy before departing from this world.

The following is stated in the traditions:

ولقد أوتي خزائن الأرض ومفاتيح البلاد وفتح عليه في حياته بلاد الحجاز واليمن وجميع جزيرة العرب وحوالي الشام والعراق وجلبت إليه الأخماس والصدقات والأعشار وأهديت إليه من الملوك هدايا فصرف كلها لوجه الله وأغنى به المسلمين.

He was given the treasures of the earth and the keys to the cities. During his lifetime, the Hijāz, Yemen, the entire Arabian Peninsular, sections of Syria and Iraq were conquered. The khums, charities and ʿushr[1] *used to be brought to him. He received gifts from the kings. He spent all these for Allāh's sake and enriched the Muslims in this way.*

Glory to Allāh! Just marvel at the excellence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Look at how he taught the Muslims the system of worldly matters just as he had taught them about Dīn. He emphasised on them to keep away from anything

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[1] Khums and ʿushr mean one-fifth and one-tenth respectively. These are forms of tax laid down by the Islamic state. Refer to the books of jurisprudence for details.

which would cause their humiliation and degradation.

Look at how he taught that Ansārī Sahābī to preserve his dignity from begging or else it will be a blemish on his face on the day of Resurrection. It was this affection towards the creation which was found to perfection in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Teachings of this nature can be from none but a Prophet; no one else can do this.

It is now our duty to adopt the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and to make them the constitution of our life. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise. Āmīn.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECTIFYING CHARACTER

Bearing in mind the conditions which Muslims are going through today, it is difficult to explain to them what type of era they experiencing. The character of people has become so bad that house after house has been destroyed.

When we speak about character to those who come here, they are unable to understand it. I believe that the corruption of the entire world is due to the corruption of character. Whether the corruption is in you or in other nations, it is due to corruption in character. I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He used to say that people claim to have made arrangements for various things, but what arrangements did they make for corrupt character? Their character is corrupt so no system of theirs can operate successfully.

When we used to hear these points from Hadrat *rahimahullāh*, we would understand them and memorize them. Later on, we saw with our own eyes that the corruption of the world is due to corruption in character. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was an expert in this field and had insight about it, this is why he said these things.

A man wrote a letter to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* in which he said that he committed an evil in his very own house. He sought permission to come to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* wrote back: “Very well, you may come but you must not disclose your identity to me because I will then think of the incident which you wrote to me about.” The man came to Thānah Bhawan and hadn’t said

anything as yet when H̲ad̲rat went into a rage against him. He scolded him in such a manner that it seemed as though the roof will fall down. H̲ad̲rat finally said to him: "Go away from here."

The man did not disclose his identity but H̲ad̲rat, through his spiritual light, realized who he was. This is why he treated him this way. Those who did not know what the whole matter was about obviously considered H̲ad̲rat to be extremely discourteous and ill-mannered. Whereas it is these very same people who are the worst in character. If a person disapproves of their bad character and tries to rectify it, they will all join hands to label him ill-mannered. They know nothing about good character nor did their forefathers. Bad character has been coming down to them from one generation to the next. Yet they are prepared to label their 'ulamā' and Sufis as ill-mannered.

Those who are a bit educated but still illiterate have no effulgence whatsoever in their hearts. Yet they will look at the 'ulamā' and Sufis and say: "Such and such action of his is against the Sunnat." I say to them: "You are breaking the obligatory injunctions yet you want to make objections against us!? It is obligatory to acquire the recognition and love of Allāh *taʿālā*; how much of it did you acquire? Pure tauh̲īd is obligatory, how much of it did you adopt? The love of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is obligatory, how much of it do you have?"

You do not know what is obligatory and what is Sunnat, yet you are using the word Sunnat to make objections against us!? As for those who reach Allāh *taʿālā* after carrying out countless Sunnats, you say that they are acting against the Sunnat!? And you level various types of accusations against them!?

Listen! Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that Sunnat means to discard this world while fard means to acquire the Hereafter. In other words, it is Sunnat to give up love for this world and obligatory to develop love for the Hereafter and give preference to it. There must have been such people in the time of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* who must have levelled similar objections against the 'ulamā' and Sufis. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* teaches them to first understand what is obligatory and what is Sunnat, then make objections.

Bad character has resulted in total corruption

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had excellent powers, this is why he could be patient and forbearing. However, the miseries and calamities of Muslims weakened him. He would not eat several meals at a time. This caused him to become thin and weak. From this you can realize how much the Ahlullāh are affected by the bad conditions and bad character of Muslims. It will be difficult for you to gauge this.

When you see students causing corruption in the madrasah, it is because of the corruption which exists in their homes. They bring their bad character from their homes to the madrasah and then display it here. This is why I want to keep my place safe from such people. If there is corruption in the temperament, they will cause corruption here as well.

The life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

In his book *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* has a chapter titled *Bāb Siyar an-Nabī sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* (the chapter on the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). In it, he

describes the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

In the course of his discussion he states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had the best temperament and was the most patient over calamities. He had the most mercy towards people because Allāh *taʿālā* sent him as a mercy to the worlds. Who, then, can be more merciful than him from among the creation. No one was ever harmed by his hand or tongue. He neither spoke harshly to anyone nor caused any physical pain to anyone. He paid the most attention to rectifying the domestic environment. No one paid as much attention as him in this regard. He was extremely particular in this regard because if corruption entered the home, it will spread to the entire city, and then from city to city until the entire country is engulfed by it. He therefore adopted a pattern which would rectify the homes and put and end to mutual disputes. This was a special attribute of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

He was very particular about his interactions with his Companions so that no one has a complaint against him. Consequently, every Companion thought that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved him the most.

Together with this, his focus on Allāh *taʿālā* never wavered. After all, he was a Prophet, and a Prophet has to give full consideration to the creation while not losing sight of the Creator in the least. He maintained a perfect balance between the two.

This resulted in each house being an example of Paradise and many people received the glad tidings of Paradise in this very world. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say: "If anyone wants to

see a Paradise dweller walking on earth, he must look at such and such person."

The need for sound character

I speak frequently about sound character because Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that this is an era in which character has become corrupt. The character of people in general is corrupt. This is why one cannot rely on their promises and covenants. How can one ever rely on the promise of a corrupt person? Hadrat's attention was therefore more on this subject. Once character is set right, other actions will be set right. One's worldly and Dīnī matters will come in order.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to express his disapproval at those who were particular about their dhikr and spiritual practices but not about their character. Confining one's self to spiritual practices while paying no attention at all to the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and remaining stubborn on one's bad character is totally against the Sunnat way. A person treading such a path can never reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

There was a man whom Hadrat removed from his supervision and delegated him to Hakīm Mustafā Sāhib. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said to the man: "You must correspond with Hakīm Sāhib and write 25 letters to him. You must then inform me about it." The man wrote 25 letters hastily within a few days and presented them to Hadrat who looked at them and cast them aside immediately. He said to the man: "These letters do not contain anything on rectification and reformation." The man came to me and said: "I perform salāh, I keep fast, I read the

Qur’ān, I read tasbīh. Now what does he want of me?”

I said: “Brother, you alone know what Hadrat wants of you.” He then went back to his house. When he returned, we came to know that he had written the letters himself and kept them aside. He had stated therein that he was the leader of the thieves who had attacked a certain place. That place belonged to one of Hadrat’s relatives.

When I learnt of this, I resolved not to interfere in any person’s matters because I do not know what evil quality is lurking in whom. In the meantime, Hadrat must be perceiving it through his spiritual exposition and treating the person accordingly.

Look! The man did not disclose himself but Hadrat perceived it through his insight and eventually caused him to confess it in his own words.

The point I am making is that as long as a person remains immersed in evil qualities, no action of his will be accepted. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* spent his entire life explaining these points to the people in various ways. The one who heard Hadrat’s teachings, understood them and put them into practice was successful. Those who did not pay heed remained as they were without any change in their lives. You people come here to me, so you have a right over me to explain beneficial points to you. Whatever I said to you today is enough provided you put it into practice. It can be a means of success in this world and in the Hereafter for those who understood it. As for the person who has no interest whatsoever in putting into practice, then a lecture of several hours will not be enough for him; in fact, it will be a waste of time. I hope you will benefit from

this. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand and then practise.

KNOWLEDGE OF EVILS IS ESSENTIAL

Hadrat Hudhayfah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates:

كان الناس يسألون رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن الخير وكنت أسئله عن الشر مخافة أن يدركني.[1]

People used to ask Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam about good while I used to ask him about evil out of fear that it does not afflict me.

This Sahābī used to ask about evil so that he could abstain from it. After all, piety is dependent on it. A poet rightly said:

عرفت الشر لا للشر ولكن للتوقية – ومن لم يعرف الشر من الخير يقع فيه

I learnt about evil not so that I could commit it but so that I could save myself from it. The person who cannot distinguish good from evil is bound to fall into evil.

It is necessary to know and identify evil not for the sake of committing it but to safeguard one's self from it. A person can only save himself from something when he knows what it is and he is able to differentiate good from evil. If he cannot do this, he will succumb to evil. Whereas it is necessary to save one's self from it.

We normally hear this in every sermon:

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٦١.

نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا

We seek refuge in Allāh from the mischief of our selves and the evils of our actions.

We learn from this that actions and the carnal self also have evils which, if a person is caught up in them, he will have to suffer loss.

I was sitting with a doctor on one occasion when a well-built young man came to him. The doctor wrote a prescription and he left. The doctor then said to me: "Look at how physically strong he looks but he lost his sexual potency. The reason for this is that he had conjugal relations with his wife during the days when it was prohibited [during her menses]. Consequently, he lost all his sexual potency." We learn from this incident that when Allāh *taʿālā* issued this prohibition:

فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَآءَ فِي الْمَحِيْضِ

Keep away, then, from women during the menstruation.[1]

He did not say it just like that. Rather, because of the severe harms which it has.

Some people do not engage in too many optional acts of worship but they are very particular about abstaining from sin. This is also a great quality. There is certainly virtue in doing good, but abstaining from evil is not any less virtuous. In fact, it is essential.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 222.

Just yesterday it was mentioned in the sermon that abstinence does not refer to making the lawful unlawful. Rather, it refers to having more trust and reliance on what is with Allāh *taʿālā* than what is with you. The People of the Book had made camel-meat unlawful on themselves and considered it to be abstinence and a way of gaining proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. The believers are ordered:

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُحَرِّمُوْا طَيِّبٰتِ مَآ أَحَلَّ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوْا ؕ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ. وَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ص وَّاتَّقُوا اللهَ الَّذِيْ أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

O believers! Do not declare as forbidden the good things which Allāh made lawful to you. Do not exceed the bounds. Surely Allāh does not love those who exceed the bounds. Eat of what Allāh provided for you - that which is lawful and pure, and continually fear Allāh in whom you believe.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place in the Qur'ān:

يٰأَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ؕ إِنِّيْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ.

O Messengers! Eat of the pure and do good. I am aware of whatever you do.[2]

The Messengers and the believers are instructed to eat pure and lawful things. We learn from this that the abstention of the People of the Book was not approved by the Sharīʿat. Rather, eating camel-meat was desirable and praiseworthy. While abstaining

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[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 87-88.

[2] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 51.

from prohibited things, how can a person start considering the lawful to be unlawful? If he imposes such restrictions on himself, he will be committing the sin of making the lawful unlawful. If he does this, it is not far fetched for him to legalize what is unlawful. The things which are harmful to man are listed by Allāh *taʿālā*. He says:

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لِلّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ. إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ.

O believers! Eat of the pure things which We provided for you and be thankful to Allah if you are indeed His servants. He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine and the animal on which the name of anyone other than Allah is invoked.[1]

If there were other unlawful things in the knowledge of Allāh *taʿālā*, He would have certainly classified them as unlawful. The fact of the matter is that when man becomes immersed in unbelief and polytheism, he loses his intelligence. Look at those polytheists: They made camel-meat unlawful to themselves, but they used to consume and drink blood with relish. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such actions.

The point which I was making is that it is totally wrong to cast aside lawful things and consider this to be saintliness. The clear texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth reject this.

I went to the house of a certain person. I had said to him from beforehand that he must not inform anyone

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 172-173.

of my coming. When I arrived, I saw a deputy collector coming forward to receive me. I concluded that my host must have mentioned my coming to him. I was aware of his nature and knew he would certainly mention it to someone or the other. Anyway, I did not say anything in his presence even though I was quite angered. I swallowed my anger. I began talking to the deputy inspector on a similar topic. I quoted this couplet to him:

> Strive in your actions and wear whatever you want. You may place a crown on your head and a flag on your shoulder; everything is permissible.

The deputy inspector was overjoyed when he heard it. He said: "I am hearing it from you; others act strict and stern. This is why I keep away from such people – they make everything impermissible." I said to him: "How can we make everything unlawful when Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا صلى وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ط إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ. إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوْءِ وَالْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ.

O mankind! Eat of the things of the earth lawful and pure. And do not follow Satan, surely he is your open enemy. He will only command you to commit evil deeds and obscenity and to attribute to Allah those things which you do not know.[1]

Now look! Is the prohibition of meat mentioned in any of these verses?

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 168-169.

A Hadīth states:

المؤمن القوي خير من المؤمن الضعيف.[1]

A strong believer is better than a weak believer.

Many evils were prevalent among the Arabs but Islam uprooted them. Islam ordered using things which are permissible but prohibited those which are unlawful. On the other hand, people are such that when they become flagrant sinners, they do not even consider the unlawful to be unlawful. They succumb to the deception of Shaytān. Consequently, they even make lawful things unlawful on themselves. Islam states that both extremes are wrong. Allāh *taʿālā* instructs:

كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا

Eat and drink but do not be wasteful.[2]

This verse prohibits wastage and extravagance. In the same way, Islam prohibits total immersion in the lawful. Total immersion means that a person becomes fully occupied in a thing and thinks about it all the time.

One of my friends said to me: "I was in the company of a certain person. He used to pay a lot of attention to food and drink, so much so that he used to have a doctor at his side to make special arrangements to cleanse his stomach." This is what you call transgressing the limits and it is prohibited.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

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[1] حلية الأولياء: ج ١٠، ص ٣١٤.

[2] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 31.

> A major portion of life has passed in worrying about what to eat in summer and what to wear in winter.

This is what is prohibited. As for wearing good clothes and eating delicious foods, this is not prohibited. In fact, if a person is wealthy, he is ordered to wear good clothes so that he may thank Allāh *taʿālā* for these bounties and so that poor people may see him wealthy and ask him. The Sharīʿat has laid down a limit for everything. Do not eat so much that you cannot walk and move around, or it causes you to become lethargic in carrying out good actions. Eating this much is certainly prohibited. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

> You are devoid of wisdom because you have filled your self with food up to your nose.

The scholars prohibit the same immersion and preoccupation which is stated in the verse "do not be wasteful". Apart from this, Allāh *taʿālā* instructs us to make use of His bounties while remaining within the limits. Yes, it is difficult to wear exclusive garments without developing ostentation and without looking down on others, to eat exotic foods without developing lethargy, and to continue worshipping Allāh *taʿālā* with the same verve and enthusiasm.

Note: In the same vein, I believe that it is not prohibited to use an air-cooler or air conditioner in summer. Yes, it is certainly prohibited if it causes a person to abstain from salāh or feel lazy to perform it [if these are not in a masjid]. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us against such a calamity. Āmīn. (compiler)

The value and loftiness of knowledge

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident:

A few scholars were at the king's palace. I was also present but my clothes were dirty. I was therefore carried out and made to sit in the rear. I went and sat in the row of slaves. The scholars then discussed a certain issue which they all failed to solve. I stood up from where I was sitting in the back row and said: "If you permit, I would like to say something in this regard." The people said that I could certainly voice my opinion. They did not recognize me. I then explained the issue in a manner which left them silent. The people said: "Come forward and sit here." The judge said: "Take my turban and place it on his head." Shaykh Saʿdī now had an opportunity to say something: "You can keep that turban of pride for yourself." Saying this, he left the assembly. When he left, the people said: "It seems as though that was Shaykh Saʿdī." They all rued over the fact that they hadn't recognized him.

Now look, he was sent to the back because of his appearance and they had to bring him forward because of his knowledge. We learn from this that we must never treat anyone with scorn no matter what type of clothing he is wearing. We also learn that knowledge elevates the rank of a person. If a person worries about nothing but clothes and is devoid of knowledge, he will be disgraced and humiliated.

A man wore the clothing which is normally worn by ʿulamā' and presented himself before a saint. The saint was sitting with his legs stretched out. When he saw this man approaching, he folded his legs out of respect for him. The saint asked him: "Where are you from and what is your name?" He replied: "People call me Iysuf (Yūsuf)." The saint realized that this was an ignorant man and said to him: "If your name is Iysuf why should I fold my legs?"

I related these incidents to you to show you that the Sharīʿat does not prohibit exclusive garments and exotic foods. Yes, the harms and evils which these can cause are prohibited. If a person wears exclusive garments, what is the need for him to look down on others? If he eats exotic foods, does it mean he must become heedless? The saints say: "If you feed exotic foods to the self, make sure you get it to do the necessary work as well." They say: "When a labourer is happy, he does more work and works harder."

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh* went to meet Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. The latter called his son and said: "This is a senior scholar. Do not let him sleep in the masjid. Make arrangements for him to sleep in such and such room. Prepare exotic foods for him." Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was a great scholar who adhered strictly to the Sunnat. You can gauge from this that the Sharīʿat permits indulgence in luxuries [provided it is within the limits]. It does not issue a total prohibition of all types of foods and clothes. As for the disapproval which you hear in this regard, it applies when people become immersed in food and drink. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say:

> This extreme luxury and comfort will eventually separate you from Dīn.

This refers to worrying about exclusive garments and exotic foods all the time. We see those who have succumbed to these things eventually moving away from Dīn. This is certainly impermissible because a non-objective has been made the objective. The person then forgets his objective in life. Similarly, the person who makes the lawful unlawful and believes it

to be abstinence is also castigated. Hadrat Maulānā used to say: "When I see a person not overly engrossed in food and clothing, I conclude that he is attached to the work. This is why he does not have too much of time to worry about food and drink. I believe that he has a good spiritual condition. On the other hand, when I see a person too occupied in food and clothing, I conclude that he is heedless of his objective."

The saints say:

> The men of the heart do not bother too much about external beautification and embellishments. (They do not even need it because their internal beautification is enough for them). Like the wall in a garden does not need any artwork [because the garden itself is so beautiful].

Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* was invited to a meal in the king's palace. He was wearing simple clothes so he was not permitted to enter. He went home, changed into an exquisite garment and came back. He was invited in. When the food was presented, he dipped his sleeve in the curry. The people asked him: "What are you doing!?" He replied: "I am feeding it because it is really this garment that has been invited. I had tried to come in earlier on but I was sent away. When I changed my garments, I was welcomed. I thought to myself on the reason for this change in attitude and realized that it was my garment. I concluded that my garment was invited to the meal."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* rectified these people. He enjoyed a laudable position among scholars but he was extremely humble. He could go to the royal palace as

and when he wanted. He went to the king's palace one day and sat down in the line of the slaves. When the king's gaze fell on him, he said: "Come and sit here, why are you sitting there?" He replied with the following couplet:

> Let me sit here because I am a worthless slave. I will therefore sit among the slaves.

When the king heard this, he hastened to him, held him by his hand, and seated him on his throne, saying:

> This is nothing but a throne. If you want to sit on my head and eyes, I will let you do so and sing your praises because you are my beloved.

The point I am making is that if the carnal self is protected against rebellion and evils, there is no harm in spending a bit more on food and clothing. After all, spiritual exercises are prescribed to remover pride and ostentation which are obstacles on this path. Apart from this, there is no harm in having and using permissible things.

> Talking and eating are permissible for the one who has reached a level of excellence. You haven't reached that level as yet, so you must remain dumb for now.

Remain silent until you acquire excellence

The points of Sufism are like exotic dishes, and they are permitted to the one who has reached the level of excellence. You haven't reached that level as yet, so do not eat and keep your mouth closed. Since you are defective, the speech which emanates from your mouth will also be defective. People listening to you

may erroneously consider you to be an expert, so you will cause harm to them as well.

As long as a person has not reached a level of perfection, he must not worry about setting right others. He must continue trying to perfect himself. Man reaches perfection through subjugation of the carnal self, and this undoubtedly requires intense striving. When Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* became the ruler of Egypt, he stayed hungry sometimes so that he may feel the hunger which is felt by poor people and think about them. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ

You will never be able to acquire perfection in virtue until you spend something of what you love.[1]

The Ahlullāh practised on this teaching.

There was a saint who felt like eating fish. A fish was bought, cooked and presented to him. Just then a beggar arrived and asked for food. The saint took the fish and gave it to him. He did not give him a part of the fish, rather the whole fish. Those who were present said to him: "You had asked for fish after you were really feeling for it, you should have at least kept a bit for yourself." He replied: "No." Someone went to the beggar, gave him money and convinced him to give the fish back. The person brought the fish and presented it to the saint but he refused to eat it. I say, he probably thought of the following verses:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 92.

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا. إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا. إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا. فَوَقَاهُمُ اللهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا.

They give food, for His love, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner. [Thinking to themselves]: "We feed you solely for the pleasure of Allāh, we desire no recompense from you nor any thanks. We fear from our Sustainer a day of dejection, of misery." So Allāh saved them from the evil of that day and bestowed them with brightness and joy.[1]

When H̲ad̲rat ʿĀ'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* used to send charity to anyone, she would ask the person on his return: "What did the people say?" If the person said that they made duʿā' for her, she would also make duʿā' for them so that the reward for charity alone is stored by Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at her level of sincerity.

The effulgence of Allāh-recognition enters a person when his stomach is empty. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* said:

> Keep your stomach empty of food so that
> you may see the effulgence of cognition.

The stomach of a true believer is filled with spiritual food. A H̲adīth states that a believer eats with one stomach while an unbeliever eats with seven. When a person has acquired spiritual treasures, he will not bother about physical pleasures. Worldly food and clothing will be of no importance to him.

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[1] Sūrah al-Insān/ad-Dahr, 76: 8-11.

Note: This is a very useful piece of advice. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

WORLDLY LOVE STOPS ONE FROM DĪN

I went to a place where all types of people assembled to listen to my lecture. I fell silent. People are accustomed to speaking and listening, so they were quite astonished when they noticed my silence. They did not say anything but I could make out that they wanted me to speak. So I said:

I saw Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* remaining silent for one two hours at a time, and those who were present in the assembly would do the same.

I then said to them: Various types of speakers must be coming to address you. Your teachers also speak to you. So what is the need for you to want me to speak? Let me do my work as I see fit.

I explained this point to them in detail. I said to them that there was a saint who had fallen completely silent towards the latter part of his life. He would not utter a single word at the time of his assembly. His disciples would sit and acquire blessings in this way. No one would want to leave in the course of the assembly. He used to be focused on Allāh *taʿālā* and those who were present used to benefit from the blessings of his focus.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* confer this bounty on us through His grace and kindness. Āmīn. (compiler)

You people enjoy listening to lectures while those people used to derive blessings from the spirituality of the saint. They used to get pleasure in merely sitting in his assembly and would not bother about getting up to leave. You should save yourself from

futile conversations so that your heart remains in Allāh's remembrance.

A poet rightly said:

> I do not know anything better than to zip my lips and close my mouth. Silence conveys a message which cannot be conveyed by words.

Note: This proves the benefit of silence. A saint said: "If a person's silence cannot benefit anyone, his speaking will also not be of benefit." (compiler)

The etiquette of an assembly

A man came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* called him to the front of the assembly and seated him in front of him. But the man began leaning against a wall. This was totally against the etiquette of the assembly. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* addressed him: "Did you never get the opportunity of sitting in the assembly of any scholar?"

The assembly of a shaykh has to be respected. This is what Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was drawing his attention to. We learn from this that a person becomes cultured only when he is taught manners and etiquette.

There is an incident about Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* that he spread out a cloth on the ground to perform salāh. Someone said to him: "O shaykh, do not do that. It is reprehensible." Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* asked: "Where is your house?" The man replied: "In Khwārizm." Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* said: "Allāhu Akbar! The sound of the takbīr can now be heard from the last row!" What he meant is that how come the matter

has been turned upside down. Knowledge goes from here to Khwārizm, it does not come from there to here. Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* then explained the ruling to him by asking him if there are straw mats in his masjid. The man replied in the affirmative. Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* said: "I see, how come it is permissible to perform salāh on grass but not on fabric?" Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* drew his attention to the fact that he should show respect to the 'ulamā'. When the 'ulamā' and Sufis are shown respect, it is done because of Dīn. The more respect a person shows to another, the more he will benefit. Respect is subservient to faith and confidence. The more faith a person has in another, the more respect he will show to him.

The reason for an absence of respect for the 'ulamā' and Sufis is that the sacredness of Dīn is no longer in the heart. This is why the people of Dīn are not shown respect. The saints are not shown respect because people have not recognized them.

I am describing to you the condition of the people of our times and the method of rectification. It is not easy to rectify people nowadays. If you try to do this, you will fall into difficulties. You will face much opposition and major tests. If you bear them, you will become a great person in Allāh's sight. This work is difficult because a person has to face the entire community.

From the experiences which I had with people I realized that people are not averse to Dīn, but they are scared of giving up the world. A youngster used to attend my assemblies. He complained to me that his father is angry with him for coming here. He fills the water pitcher so that his father could perform wudū', but his father does not use it. When I heard

this I said to him: “Your father is certainly not unhappy with you. He loves you. It is his love which is causing his displeasure. He thinks that if you continue coming here, you will not do any worldly work. You should therefore combine Dīn with worldly activities. You will have to bear some difficulties because Dīn is the objective. You must carry out your spiritual practices at night, and see to the farm and the grazing animals during the day. When your father sees that he is not suffering any worldly loss by your coming here – in fact, you are doing his work with more enthusiasm – he will not dislike your Qur’ān recitation, tahajjud, etc. If his worldly needs are not affected in any way and his son becomes a saint, how can he suffer loss?”

I know how these worldly people think. When the boy did as I advised him, his father became pleased with him to such an extent that if he did not come to me for a few days, his father would ask him: “So many days have passed and you didn’t go to Maulānā?” Subsequently, his father came to me, shook hands with me and held my hand for quite some time. I concluded that this handshake was one of love and regret. He must have thought about his previous attitude. He developed so much of confidence in his son that when he was about to open a factory, he said: “Why should I call any outsider for the opening ceremony when my own son is a saint?”

I related this story to you to show you that people are generally not averse to Dīn. No loss can be suffered in Dīn; there is nothing but benefit in it. I challenge anyone to adopt Dīn and see what peace and tranquillity he experiences.

AN ASSEMBLY CAN BE TAKEN TO TASK FOR THE CRIME OF A SINGLE PERSON

It is permissible to take an entire assembly to task for the crime of a single person. The following Hadīth is quoted in *Sahīh Bukhārī*:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم رأى نخامة في قبلة المسجد وهو يصلي بين يدي الناس. فحتها ثم قال حين انصرف إن أحدكم إذا كان في الصلوة فإن الله قبل وجهه، فلا يتنخمن أحد قبل وجهه في الصلوة.[1]

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu relates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saw phlegm in the masjid in the direction of the qiblah while he was leading the people in salāh. He wiped it off and then turned around and addressed the congregation: "When you are in salāh, Allāh taʿālā is in front of you. You should therefore not spit to the front while you are in salāh."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at his humbleness. Although the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were at his beck and call, he removed the phlegm himself. This ought to serve as an example for us. (compiler)

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes in his commentary to this Hadīth:

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[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب الأذان: ج ١، ص ٢٠٨.

قد تقدم في باب حك البزاق باليد من المسجد من أبواب المساجد مع الكلام عليه، وزاد في هذه الرواية فتغيظ على أهل المسجد ففيه جواز معاتبة المجموع على الأمر الذي ينكر وإن كان الفعل صدر من بعضهم لأجل التحذير من معاودة ذلك.[1]

Wiping off phlegm from the masjid with one's own hand was explained previously. The additional point in this narration is that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam expressed his anger at all the congregants. The point which we derive from this is that it is permissible to scold and reprimand an entire assembly for an action which was done by one or a few of them. It is permissible to do this because it will serve as a warning to the others not to repeat such an inappropriate action.

Look at how the scholars extract rulings from the Ahādīth. From the above Hadīth, the author of *Fath al-Bārī* proves that when a single person commits an inappropriate action, it is permissible to reprimand the entire assembly so that no one may repeat that action in the future.

I say, one wisdom behind reprimanding the entire congregation is as explained above. Another reason could be that because the rest of the congregation approved of the action of the one person, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reprimanded all of them. A person who approves of an action is as though he committed it himself. The acceptance of the above-mentioned action is deduced from the fact that no

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[1] فتح الباري: ج ٣، ص ٥٤.

one reprimanded the person, no one went forward to clean it off, nor did anyone inform Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam about it.

As for the principle that your approval of the action of another is as though you committed it yourself, a parallel to it can be found in the Qur'ān. Let me explain.

The Qur'ān addresses the Jews who were living in the era of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادّٰرَءْتُمْ فِيْهَا وَاللهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ.

When you killed a person and cast the blame for this (crime) upon one another, and Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

This incident occurred during the time of H̲ad̲rat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām; not in the time of the Jews who are addressed. The scholars explain that the present addressees are held responsible for the action of the past people because they approved of the action of their forefathers, were happy with it, and did not absolve themselves from it.

There are many places in the Qur'ān where latter generations were reprimanded for actions committed by their ancestors because they did not distance themselves from those actions; rather, they approved of them. The verse quoted previously is an example of this. We quote the verse again:

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادّٰرَءْتُمْ فِيْهَا وَاللهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

When you killed a person and cast the blame for this (crime) upon one another, and Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says "you killed". The addressees are the Jews who were living in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* while the incident took place in the time of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. A man was killed from the Banī Isrā'īl and the identity of the murderer was not known. Each person was trying to place the blame on the other. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* finally prayed to Allāh *taʿālā* and he was informed of the identity of the murderer.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place in the Qur'ān:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّوْرَ.

When We took a covenant from you and raised over you the Tūr.[2]

Here too the addressees are the Jews of Madīnah although no such covenant was taken from them nor was Mt. Tūr raised over them. This entire incident took place in the time of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*.

Coming back to the previously-quoted Hadīth, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was quite angered at seeing the phlegm in the masjid because the person who spat it out disregarded the sanctity of the masjid. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* issued a warning to everyone so that a similar incident does not recur.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 63.

I say, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly expressed his anger but he did not name anyone. He saw a mistake committed, the masjid was desecrated, he disapproved of the action, expressed his disapproval, but did not ask anyone to clean it off. Instead, he did it with his own blessed hand. Through this action, he displayed the sanctity of the masjid and demonstrated his great character to the Muslim community. Glory to Allāh.

From this we learn that it is permissible to express anger on occasions of this nature. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* used to get angry for Allāh's sake. The same can be said about the Sufis. Anger in itself is not blameworthy. In fact, there are occasions which necessitate anger. We have to learn when to get angry and when not to.

This is the Book of Allāh, understand what it says. You do not have the knowledge, what are you going to understand? Nowadays no one is prepared to learn and teach. There is also an absence of intelligence, so a person cannot even use it to understand. When we are faced with an important issue, it is the duty of an ʿālim to provide a solution and to explain to the masses. He will have to remove their doubts and misgivings. If not, the masses will remain totally heedless. Just as people can be taught by word of mouth, they can be taught through one's actions. In fact, practical education is more effective than verbal education. One should therefore rectify one's actions.

Look! Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not instruct any S̲ah̲ābī to remove the phlegm; he did it with his own blessed hand. Imagine the effect it must have had on those who were present, and how much respect for the masjid must have developed in their hearts.

We learn from this incident that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to get angry when he saw anything which was against the Sharīʿat. He would also display his anger to the entire assembly so that everyone is admonished.

It is stated in a H̲adīth that when Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to get angry, his face would turn red as though someone had squeezed a pomegranate on his cheeks.[1]

Another H̲adīth states that he would repeat a point several times when he was angered. When the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* would observe the pain it caused him, they would hope that he fell silent.

The fact of the matter is that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came to teach Dīn, and it is difficult to explain Dīn. They needed to be strict at times so that rectification is realized.

When I was in my village I saw a large group of people approaching. A man came to me and said: "These people are coming to ask you about anger. They want to know why you get so angry." Before I could say anything to them, I quoted the above H̲adīth to them. I said to them: "Listen! This is how your Prophet used to get angry. His face used to turn red as though someone had squeezed a pomegranate on his cheeks. Did you hear! This was how your Prophet got angry. When he used to get angry, even a senior S̲ah̲ābī like H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* used to become terrified and he would say:

رَضِيْنَا بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَبِيًّا.

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، باب الايمان بالقبر: ٢٢.

We are pleased with Allāh as our Sustainer, Islam as our religion, and Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam as our Prophet.

The prohibition of excessive questioning

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was delivering a sermon from the pulpit. A man stood up and asked him a question which he answered. The man then asked another question related to lineage. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "He is born from such and such person." In other words, he was born out of wedlock. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then became angry and said: "Very well, you may continue asking questions. Anyone who wants to pose questions may do so." Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* perceived the anger of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said to him: "Let it pass or else no one will be saved; everyone will be disgraced."

Listen! To get angry for Allāh's sake is from among the essentials of īmān. The stronger one's īmān, the more he will be angered by sins and acts of disobedience. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* possess the highest level of īmān, this is why they are most angered by sins. They express their disapproval so that people too will dislike sinning.

If a person does not experience anger at all, then it is nothing to applaud. On the contrary, it is a defect in him. In the same way, anger which causes a person to commit impermissible actions, hurl verbal abuses, become violent – in short, to go beyond the limits – also cannot be applauded. His excellence lies in becoming angry when the occasion demands it, provided he does not transgress the limits.

The above-quoted Hadīth makes mention of the anger of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but it was limited to points from which the people may learn the sanctity of the masjid.

Now listen to another incident where Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did the exact opposite. The scholars normally quote it for additional benefit. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was in the masjid with a group of Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum.* A Bedouin entered and began urinating in the masjid. A few Companions hastened towards the Bedouin to stop him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* held them back and asked them to let him finish what he was doing. If they stopped him there and then, he would end up messing other parts of the masjid. Furthermore, stopping him from urinating could cause some type of illness to him. Now it is only the masjid which has been messed, let it not happen that his health is affected. When the man finished, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* addressed him in a soft and compassionate tone: "The masājid are the Houses of Allāh. Salāh is performed in them, people read the Qur'ān and engage in Allāh's remembrance. They are not the places for relieving one's self." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then got up, filled a bucket with water and poured it over the place where the man urinated. This made a deep impression on the man's heart. He went to his people and spoke about the noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* He added: "By Allāh, he neither became angry at me nor did he repulse me." The man went and related this noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in many places, and it left a good effect on the people.

Now look! In the first incident he expressed his anger when he saw the phlegm in the masjid. And here he does not become angry in the least even though the man urinated in the masjid. In fact, he explained to the man in an affectionate manner.

We learn from this that when a person is involved in rectification and propagation, it is essential for him to understand the situation and occasion. If not, he will cause more harm than good. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said: Enjoin good and prohibit evil, but not in a manner that good becomes evil and vice versa. If an attitude of this nature persists, enjoining good and prohibiting evil will cause harm and the benefit will be replaced by corruption.

There is another incident which demonstrates the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* An unbeliever came as a guest to him. The man ate a lot in the evening. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made his sleeping arrangements. The man got up early in the morning and was gone. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* emerged from his room, he noticed that his guest had disappeared and the bedding was soiled. He brought water and began washing it with his blessed hands. The man came back for some reason or the other. He was mortified when he observed the scene before him. He was so impressed by the pure character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he embraced Islam.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not say anything to the man. Instead, he thought to himself that the man has the filth of unbelief within him, and this external impurity is nothing compared to that. He blessed the man with his pure character which

had an effect on his unbelief and prompted him to embrace Islam there and then.

The scholars extracted the principles of rectification and propagation in the light of these incidents. A different rule applies to those who are close to a person and have more opportunities of listening to him and learning from him. Another approach is adopted when dealing with strangers and outsiders. If close associates commit the slightest mistake, they are taken to task immediately. This is because they had many occasions to learn, but they did not. As for strangers and outsiders, their major and serious offences are overlooked and pardoned. They will be taught in an affectionate manner. Their bad mannerisms will be treated with noble character. Because they have fewer occasions and opportunities of learning Dīn, a soft approach is needed to teach them.

The Sufis adopt the same approach. When newcomers arrive at their place, they do not reprimand them immediately. They first teach them about Dīn and make them aware of right and wrong. When they break the rules after that, they are reprimanded.

Note: We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to adopt the same Sunnat method in our work of rectification, training and propagation. Āmīn. (compiler)

RASŪLULLĀH ﷺ WAS NOT TAUGHT POETRY

The compositions of poets are by and large based on their imaginations and generally contain lies and exaggerations. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* said with reference to Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu *ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

We did not teach him poetry nor is it suitable for him.[1]

Why was poetry not suitable for him? The following is stated in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*:

ولا يصلح له صلى الله عليه وسلم الشعر لأنه يدعو لغير المعنى المراعاة اللفظ والوزن ولأن أحسنه المبالغة والمجازفة والإغراق في الوصف وأكثره تحسين ما ليس بحسن وتقبيح ما ليس بقبح، وكل ذلك ليستدعى الكذب أو يحاكيه الكذب وجل جناب الشارع عن ذلك.[2]

Poetry was not suitable for Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam because a poet sometimes has to change the meaning of a word merely out of consideration for the word and scale. Furthermore, the poem which is considered to be best is the one which contains hyperboles, products of the imagination, or describing something beyond what it really is. Most poetry beautifies the ugly, and speaks good of what is not good. All these ingredients require fabrications or

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

[2] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٤٧.

things similar to lies. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is obviously far above such things.

We learn from the above that poetry requires several futile and pointless ingredients. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* protected Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from it and did not give him the knowledge of poetry. He became so unattached to it that he could never compose a rhyming couplet.

The Arabs used to refer to the Qur'ān as poetry and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as a poet. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the following verse to refute this allegation:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

We did not teach him poetry nor is it suitable for him.[1]

Their allegation is refuted by asking them, how can the Qur'ān be considered to be poetry and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* a poet when he did not have any knowledge of poetry? The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the difference between the Qur'ān and poetry. If the Qur'ān is not poetry then Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is obviously not a poet.

لا يخفى على من به أدنى مسكة أن هذا الكتاب الحكيم المتضمن لجميع المنافع الدينية والدنيوية على أسلوب أفحم كل منطق يباين الشعر ولا مثل الثريا الثرى أما لفظا فلعدم وزنه وتقفيته، وأما معنى فلأن الشعر

[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

تخيلات مرغبة ومنفرة أو نحو ذلك، وهو مقر الأكاذيب ولذا قيل أعذبه أكذبه.[1]

The person who has the slightest affinity with literature will know that this wise Book which is filled with all types of religious and worldly benefits in a style which silenced every speaking person is totally – in letter and spirit – distant from poetry like the distance between the Pleiades and the ground.

The difference between the two as regards words is clear because the Qur'ān is not confined to any scales and rhyming words. As for the difference between the two in meaning, we know that poetry is the product of a few attractive or repulsive imaginary thoughts. Also, poetry is a cache of lies and falsehood. This is why it is said that the sweetest poetry is the one with the most falsehood.

Note: The author presents an excellent example when he says that they are as distant as the *tharā* and *thurayyā* (the first refers to the ground and the second to the Pleiades which is the highest star in the cosmos). The same can be said about the distance and difference between poetry and the Qur'ān. (compiler)

والقرآن حكم وعقائد وشرائع والمراد من نفي تعليمه صلى الله عليه وسلم بتعليم الكتاب الشعر نفي أن يكون القرآن شعرا على سبيل الكناية لأن من علمه الله تعالى هو القرآن وإذا لم يكن المعلم شعرا

[1] روح المعاني: ج ١٣، ص ٤٦.

لم يكن القرآن شعرا ألبتة. وهذا رد لما كانوا يقولونه من أن القرآن شعر والنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم شاعر، وغرضهم من ذلك أن ما جاء به عليه الصلوة والسلام من القرآن افتراء وتخيل وحاشا ثم حاشا من ذلك.[1]

On the other hand, the Qur'ān is an embodiment of wisdom. It contains correct beliefs and injunctions of the Sharīʿat. The allegation that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was taught poetry is rejected. In this way, reference is made to the fact that the Qur'ān is not poetry. This is because the thing which Allāh taʿālā taught Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was the Qur'ān. If the thing which he was taught is not poetry, the Qur'ān is not poetry.

This is a refutation of their allegation that the Qur'ān is poetry and that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is a poet. Their purpose in making this allegation was to show that the thing which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam refers to as the Qur'ān is not the speech of Allāh taʿālā but a fabrication on his part and a product of his imagination. But this is definitely not the case.

Look at how he explained the difference between the Qur'ān and poetry. The Qur'ān contains points of wisdom, genuine beliefs, and an explanation of injunctions. On the other hand, poetry is merely a product of the imagination. In fact, the majority of it contains falsehood, fabrication and hyperboles. There is a famous saying about poetry:

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٤٧.

The more falsehood in poetry, the sweeter
it is.

Poems and poetry have nothing whatsoever to do with prophet-hood. In addition to poetry not being able to embellish the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, even scholars considered it to be a blemish. Imām Shāfiʿī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said:

لو لا الشعر بالعلماء يزري – لكنت اليوم أشعر من لبيد

Had poetry not been a cause of defectiveness in the ʿulamā', I would have been a greater poet than Labīd.

No matter what, the Arabs prided themselves over their poetry. This is why they referred to non-Arabs as ʿAjam (those who are dumb). They had a deep attachment with poetry. In fact, they were totally immersed in it. Even their children were poets. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the Qur'ān to put an end to this attachment. They were men of letters and experts in the language. This is why they recognized the Qur'ān and submitted before it. The enjoyment and delight which they used to experience in poetry was now enjoyed in the recitation of the Qur'ān. In fact, far more than what they experienced in poetry.

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Shāh Walī Allāh <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib Mu<u>h</u>addith Dehlawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in *Tafhīmāt* that nothing apart from the Qur'ān could put an end to their poetry. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Shāh <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* discusses this subject very beautifully. It is quoted verbatim:

جاء في الحديث ما أذن الله تعالى لشيء ما أذن لنبي يتغنى بالقرآن يجهر به.[1] وجاء أيضا ليس منا من لم يتغن بالقرآن، وسر ذلك أن الله تعالى أنزل القرآن بلسان العرب وكانوا مشغولين بأشعار ينشدونها في محافلهم ويتغنون بها في خلوتهم وجلوتهم.

It is mentioned in a H̲adīth that Allāh taʿālā does not listen as attentively to anything as He does to the beautiful recitation of the Qur'ān of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Another H̲adīth states that the person who does not read the Qur'ān in a beautiful style is not of us. The reason behind this is that Allāh taʿālā revealed the Qur'ān in the language of the Arabs who used to sing and quote their poems in their assemblies, in public and in moments of solitude.

Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* adds:

Divine wisdom demanded that the Arabs be made to read in the same balanced style which they were accustomed to. However, it must have reached the peak of eloquence. Parts of it are therefore in rhyming verses. This slight similarity is sufficient. Unlike poetry, the Qur'ān does not submit to any scales.

وذلك لأن النشائد توجد في كل أمة من أمم الناس وأوزانهم مختلفة فالعرب لهم أوزان والهنود لهم أوزان ورأينا جماعة من أهل البدو

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ١٩٥.

ينشدون النشائد من غير التقييد بالأوزان المعروفة...والأمر الملخص ما ذكرنا.[١]

Speech of this nature was needed because songs and hymns are found in every nation of the world, each having its own style and scale. The Arabs have their own and the Indians their own. We also came across a group of Bedouins singing songs without restricting themselves to the scales which were common at the time… This is the gist of whatever we mentioned.

أنزل القرآن نشائد لعادة العرب في إنشادهم الأشعار كان موافقة الحق ان ينشد تلك النشائد على ما هو المألوف عندهم من طرق الإنشاء. وهو المراد بالتغني فعبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الرضا بسبب الموافقة لمراده بالاستماع والإصغاء ليس هنالك كلام يعبر عنه بأفصح من هذه العبارة. والله أعلم.[٢]

When the Qur'ān was revealed in line with the poetic temperament of the Arabs, Allāh *taʿālā* wanted that its words be read in a beautiful voice. In other words, with tajwīd and in a measured way. And that it be sung in solitude to provide freshness to the temperament, as was the practice of the Arabs with their poetry.

This is the meaning of *taghannī bi al-Qur'ān*. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that Allāh *taʿālā* listens attentively to the Qur'ān

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[1] تفهيمات: ج ١، ص ١٤٤.

[2] تفهيمات: ج ١، ص ١٤٤.

recitation of the Prophet, it refers to Allāh's pleasure. The pleasure was earned over the recitation of the Qur'ān in this way because it was in line with what Allāh *taʿālā* ordered. No other word could have expressed this meaning more eloquently. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

I now say to you, you have learnt that poetry is not suitable for a Prophet. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself speaks out against poets in the Qur'ān. He says:

وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُنَ. أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ وَادٍ يَّهِيْمُوْنَ. وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ.

As for the poets – it is only those who are in error that follow them. Have you not seen them wandering aimlessly in every valley? And that they say what they do not practise?[1]

The scholars consider poetry to be a cause of defectiveness. Allāh *taʿālā* prescribed the Qur'ān to put an end to poetry. If this is the case, I cannot understand this reverse movement. What I means is that the Qur'ān came as an alternative to poetry but we are replacing the Qur'ān with poetry. When the Qur'ān or Hadīth is read, it has no effect on us. But no sooner some poetry is sung, we go into an ecstasy. This is extremely sorrowful. Even more surprising is when we do not learn the lessons of Allāh-recognition from the Qur'ān and Sunnat, but we feel we can traverse the stations of Sufism through poetry. It is absolutely foolish and irrational.

Note: This demonstrates the frankness and straightforwardness of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 224-226.

*ra*h*imahullāh* in speaking out against poetry. It is sufficient admonishment for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE RIGHTS OF RAMAḎĀN

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم. أما بعد.

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ.

يٰۤأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ.

O believers! Ordained for you is fasting as it was ordained for those before you so that you may become pious.[1]

We learn from this verse that the acquisition of piety is the real objective for the obligation of fasting. In other words, man's passion is broken down and his carnal self which constantly prompts him towards evil (*nafs-e-ammārah)* is transformed to one which experiences tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā* (*nafs-e-muṯma'innah*). Furthermore, it develops good capabilities and praiseworthy qualities. This is the fundamental objective behind the obligation of fasting. By fasting, the person becomes habituated to restraining his carnal self from its various demands; and the firmness of this habit is the foundation of taqwā.

If these things are not acquired from fasting, and a person restricts himself to hunger and thirst, and his fasting is only in name, then he will acquire nothing from it. A fast of this nature has no value and rank in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. Even if a jurist or muftī

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 183.

issues a verdict of validity for such a fast, and says that it is valid in the light of the Sharīʿat, this fast is not acceptable in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not prescribe such a fast in the first place which does not result in taqwā. I would like to expound on this theme to you. Listen attentively.

Fasting has an external dimension and an internal one. The external fast comprises of abstaining from food and drink. However, you can understand for yourself that fasting cannot be just this because abstaining from food and drink is not praiseworthy in itself for man because he can do this even when he becomes angry. That is, sometimes he gives up food and drink out of anger. Thus, the objective of fasting, and the fruit of abstaining from food and drink is that man abstains from the prohibitions of the Sharīʿat and does not commit anything that is unlawful. For example, abstaining from speaking lies, backbiting, etc. this is in fact what taqwā entails. This is the reality of fasting and its internal dimension. And this is the fundamental objective behind the promulgation of fasting. The following words of the Qur'ān are clear proofs in this regard:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

…so that you may become pious.

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to qurbānī:

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts that reaches Him.[1]

Just as Allāh *taʿālā* said with regard to qurbānī, the same can be understood with regard to fasting. That is, Allāh *taʿālā* made fasting obligatory so that man's desires may be broken, the heat of his carnal self may be extinguished, his *nafs-e-ammārah* may be converted into *nafs-e-muṯma'innah*, and man may acquire rectitude and piety within him. However, if this benefit has not been realized, then he has acquired nothing but hunger and thirst. And since this hunger and thirst is against the actual intention of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, you yourself are responsible for the surprise which you are experiencing. Had you carried out the order of the Sharīʿat while observing its limits and prerequisites, you would have certainly enjoyed its fruits.

I constantly say to you – and this is my complaint to you – that the general condition today is that even the actions which people do, they do not fulfil the reality, the etiquette and prerequisites of those actions. What, then, can be said of the actions which they do not carry out? They will carry out an action, bear difficulties in carrying it out, and then feel that they are absolved of their responsibility. However, on the day of Resurrection they will realize that it was not accepted in Allāh's court, and that whatever hardships they had borne for it went to waste.

Fasting is one of those actions. Those who do not fast in the first place do it because they – due to their carnal self and ignorance - have no knowledge of its

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[1] Sūrah al-H̲ajj, 22: 37.

importance and virtue. As for those who fast, there are many among them regarding whom Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كم من صائم ليس له من صيامه إلا الظمأ، وكم من قائم ليس له في قيامه إلا السهر.[1]

Many a fasting person gains nothing from his fast except thirst. Many a person engaged in night worship gains nothing from it except sleeplessness.

This too is a terrible situation and a major loss. It is essential for us to save ourselves from it.

I will now explain this <u>H</u>adīth in the light of another <u>H</u>adīth. A <u>H</u>adīth in *Mishkāt Sharīf* states:

من لم يدع قول الزور والعمل به فليس لله حاجة في أن يدع طعامه وشرابه.[2]

A person who does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, then Allāh taʿālā has no need for him to abstain from food and drink.

This is because Allāh *taʿālā* is free from the need for food and drink. If the person abstains from both, the benefit of his abstention is not going to reach Allāh *taʿālā* in any way. In no way will Allāh's need be fulfilled thereby causing Him to become pleased with the person. Instead, Allāh *taʿālā* looks at the condition of the heart and piety; this is what He

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[1] رواه الدارمي. مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

[2] مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٦.

focuses on. If these are not found in the fast, of what benefit was it?

In his commentary to this Hadīth, the author of *Mirqāt* says that *qaul az-zūr* means *qaul al-bātil*. In other words, to utter something which entails a sin irrespective of whether it is speaking a lie, the utterance of unbelief, a false testimony, a fabrication, a slander, backbiting, a baseless complaint, accusing someone of adultery, being vulgar and abusive, and cursing and mocking. All these are included in *qaul az-zūr*. As for "acting upon them", this refers to immoral acts. They are referred to as *zūr* because they entail sin just as *zūr* is found in speaking lies.

I say that although *zūr* is essentially an adjective of *qaul* (word), bearing in mind that it is also an injurious action of the tongue, the words "and acting on them" have been added as a further elucidation. Thus, *qaul az-zūr* and *wa al-ʿamal bihi* are one and the same thing.

The present Hadīth only mentions *qaul az-zūr*. Another Hadīth lists five things which break the fast and wudū'. They are: speaking lies, backbiting, carrying tales, casting evil glances, taking false oaths.[1]

From the above mentioned sins, some of them are serious and severe. For example, backbiting especially while one is fasting. A Hadīth states that a person who engages in backbiting in the course of the day has in fact broken his fast. Another Hadīth is quoted in the marginal notes of *al-Hidāyah*:

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[1] *Al-Jāmiʿ as-Saghīr*, p. 314.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by two persons. One of them was cupping the other. In the course of the cupping, one was backbiting about someone and the second person did not stop or reprimand him. On seeing this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم[١]

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu,* the narrator of this Hadīth, says that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that they have broken their fast, it was not because of the act of cupping, but because of backbiting and listening to it.

Look at the repugnance of backbiting and listening to backbiting as gauged from this Hadīth. The fast broke on account of it. Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* must have heard it from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because he cannot issue a ruling on the basis of his own opinion.

This is supported by another narration related by Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu.* Two fasting people performed the zuhr or ʿasr salāh. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* completed his salāh, he turned to them and said: "Repeat your wudū' and salāh, but complete your fast." (In other words, do not eat or drink anything until sunset). "However, you must keep qadā' of this

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الإلباس، ج ١، ص ١٤١.

fast tomorrow." (In other words, this fast of yours has been invalidated. It is obligatory on you to keep qaḏā' of it). The two said: "O Rasūlullāh! What is the reason for this?" Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "Because you were backbiting such and such person."[1]

Some commentators of this H̱adīth write: Although the 'ulamā' say that this incident was as a way of castigating and reprimanding them, i.e. their fast according to the Sharī'at has not been invalidated, they concur that backbiting reduces the reward of the wuḏū' and s̱alāh. H̱aḏrat Sufyān Thaurī *raẖimahullāh*, acting on the apparent and outward meaning of this H̱adīth, says that backbiting is actually an invalidator of a fast.

No matter what, the point which is clear from the above Aẖādīth is that there is a distinct contradiction between fasting and these sins. In other words, these sins cannot be combined with fasting. This is especially so with regard to backbiting – its repugnance and abhorrence is very clear.

The author of *Mirqāt* explains the reason for the non-acceptance of this man's fast. He says that eating is in itself permissible. The man abstained from eating, but committed an act which is intrinsically unlawful, and is not permissible under any circumstance. This is why the person became eligible for Allāh's wrath, and his act of obedience [the fast] is more worthy of being flung back on his face. Allāh *ta'ālā* has no regard whatsoever for the fast of such a person, and He does not look at him with affection.

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[1] مشکوۃ، باب حفظ اللسان، ج ۲.

This is why I say that it is easy to give up food and drink. However, when a person keeps a fast which is devoid of lies, backbiting, futile conversations, immoral and shameless discussions, he will find it difficult. There are many who are bearing the hardships of fasting, and becoming thin due to fasting for an entire month. However, because their fast is coupled with backbiting, complaining, speaking lies, and various other futile conversations and discussions, they are not acquiring the objective of the fast which is piety. How can they then be rewarded for such a fast in the Hereafter!? It is so unfortunate that they deprived themselves of eating, and did not even get the reward for it. Can there be a worse loss than this!? People like this have lost in this world and in the Hereafter.

To sum up, the acceptance of a fast in Allāh's court is dependent on giving up sins. We learn from this that fasting enjoys a special status in the Sharī'at. It is an important obligation and a salient feature of Islam. This is why more importance is given to it. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* used to give immense importance to the month of Ramadān and used to wait the entire year for the arrival of this month. With the arrival of this month, he used to direct the attention of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* to the virtues of this month. Many great virtues with regard to the month of Ramadān have been explained by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.*

Hadrat Salmān *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* delivered a sermon on the last Friday of Sha'bān. He said: "O people! A great and blessed month has dawned upon you (i.e. Ramadān). It is a month in which there is a

night which is superior to a thousand months. Allāh made fasting during the day compulsory and night worship (tarāwīh) less than compulsory (Sunnat). Anyone who does an optional act in this month shall receive the reward of a compulsory act done in other months. Anyone who carries out a compulsory act in this month shall receive the reward of 70 compulsory acts done in other months. It is the month of patience, and the reward for patience is Paradise. And it is a month of generosity. It is a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. The one who provides food to a fasting person (to open his fast), it will be a means for the pardoning of his sins and emancipation from the Hell-fire. And he will receive the same reward as the fasting person without his reward decreasing in any way." Someone said: "O Rasūlullāh! Everyone does not have so much to give whereby a fasting person can open his fast." (This person assumed that the fasting person must be given enough food with which he can eat to his fill). Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh shall reward the person even if he gives him just one dry date, enough water to quench his thirst, or milk to which water has been added. The person who provides a full meal to a fasting person will be provided with special water from my pond after which he will not feel thirsty until he enters Paradise." He added in the same sermon: "It is a month where the first part of it is a mercy, the middle part is a means of forgiveness, and the last part is a means of emancipation from the Hell-fire. The person who lessens the burden on his slave in this month,

Allāh *taʿālā* will pardon him and give him salvation from the Hell-fire."[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardons the fasting people of my ummat on the last night." He was asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is that night the night of power (laylatul qadr)?" He replied: "No. The fact of the matter is that every labourer has to be paid his wage on the completion of his labour."[2]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: Paradise is adorned from the beginning of the year for the month of Ramadān. When it is the first day of Ramadān, a breeze blows from beneath the ʿArsh (the grand throne of Allāh). It blows over the leaves of Paradise and passes through the doe-eyed damsels of Paradise. They say: "O our Sustainer! Appoint husbands for us from among Your servants through whom our eyes will take delight, and their eyes will take delight from us."

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are eight entrances to Paradise, one of which is called Bāb ar-Rayyān. This entrance is reserved for the fasting persons. No one else can enter through it."

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The person who keeps fast in the month of Ramadān with īmān and the hope of receiving rewards, shall have his past sins pardoned. The person who spends the night in worship in the month of Ramadān with

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[1] مشکوۃ، کتاب الصوم.

[2] مشکوۃ، کتاب الصوم.

īmān and the hope of receiving rewards shall have his past sins pardoned."[1]

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The fast and the Qur'ān will both intercede on behalf of a person on the day of Resurrection. The fast will say: "O my Sustainer! I kept him away from food and drink during the day, so accept my intercession in his favour." The Qur'ān will say: "O my Sustainer! I kept him away from having a full night's sleep, so accept my intercession in his favour." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The intercession of both will be accepted."[2]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The rewards for the good actions of a believer are multiplied by ten going up to 700. Allāh *taʿālā* said: The reward for fasting is excluded from this because fasting is for Me and I will personally reward the person for it. This is because a servant gives up his desires, food and drink solely for My sake."[3]

From the above narrations we can gauge how great a worship fasting is. I say that the greatest act of worship is salāh, but it too comes to an end with having to relieve one's self, sleep, etc. On the other hand, fasting is a worship which remains intact whether you are awake or sleeping. If you go to relieve yourself, you are still fasting. In short, in no

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[1] مشکوۃ، کتاب الصوم.

[2] مشکوۃ، کتاب الصوم.

[3] مشکوۃ، کتاب الصوم.

condition does it separate itself from you. This is a special feature of fasting which is not found in other acts of worship. Another major peculiarity of this worship which you must have observed from the above narrations is that Allāh *taʿālā* excluded its reward by saying:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

In other words, the rewards for other acts of worship are conveyed via the angels, while Allāh *taʿālā* will give the rewards for fasting Himself.

Qāḏī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *raḫimahullāh* explains this Ḫadīth by saying: The reward for fasting is that the person will behold Me in the Hereafter, while in this world he will be blessed with My *maʿrifat* (true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*).

He writes further:

A narration of Bayhaqī *raḫimahullāh* states that someone asked Ḫaḏrat Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah *raḫimahullāh* the meaning of this Ḫadīth-e-Qudsī. He said: This is a most authentic Ḫadīth. It means that when judgement will be passed on the mutual rights of people on the day of Resurrection, and a person has certain rights which he owes to people, then his good actions will be given to them to the extent that he is left with no good actions. However, when it comes to fasting, Allāh *taʿālā* will not give the person's fasts as payment for the rights which he owes. Allāh *taʿālā* will say: "Leave the fasts aside, because he kept them solely for Me." Allāh *taʿālā* will then fulfil the fasting person's remaining dues, and give rewards to those whom he is owing those dues

until they too are happy. Thus we see that a fast remains with a fasting person until it draws him to Paradise.[1]

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful Hadīth which displays the immense kindness and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at how valued this act of worship – fasting – is in Allāh's court and how much He loves it that He separates it from the other actions of His servant and expresses His appreciation of it by saying: "It is solely for Me, and I will personally reward him for it."

You can well imagine what the Ahlullāh must be experiencing when they hear these glad tidings. They say on such an occasion:

> If I were to give my life on hearing this
> glad tiding, it will be worth it.

If you do not know this Hadīth, how will you value your fast? This is why I say that there is a need for knowledge before action. One's beliefs are put right through knowledge, and a yearning for action is created. A person learns the greatness and rank of a thing. This is how the 'ulamā' and reformers of every era undertook the reformation and rectification of the ummat. They would first convey correct knowledge to them, and through it they would urge them towards actions. The Sharī'at belongs to Allāh *taʿālā* and He Himself placed beauty and attraction in it. Therefore, if an 'ālim merely conveys the words of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in a simple and easy manner to the people, they will develop a love for the Sharī'at. There were Allāh-fearing 'ulamā' of the past who delivered such

[1] *Fath al-Qadīr*.

lectures that in a single assembly, countless non-Muslims repented and became Muslims.

No matter what, after hearing the virtues of fasting as explained by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, there should be no one who does not bear the difficulty of fasting happily and does not seek its rewards.

Another reason for the uniqueness and importance of fasting is that it has a certain level of similarity with Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, everything has to be given up. A fasting person neither eats, drinks nor engages in intercourse. In this way, he bears a certain amount of similarity with Allāh *taʿālā* because He is totally pure from such things.

A fasting person is also similar to angels. He therefore acquires a type of sanctity and his soul is purified. However, this will only be when you, together with abstaining from food and drink, give up sins. This is because just as the angels do not eat and drink, they do not commit sins. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the angels:

لَا يَعْصُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَا اَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ

They do not disobey Allāh in whatever He commands them. They only do what they have been commanded.[1]

Thus, if together with abstaining from food and drink, you abstain from sins, you will bear total similarity with the angels. This is the essence of piety which is the fundamental objective of the obligation of fasting. And this is the reason why Allāh *taʿālā*

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[1] Sūrah at-Tahrīm, 66: 6.

made fasting a prelude to another most important act of worship, viz. h̲ajj. The months of h̲ajj have been delineated after the month of Ramad̲ān so that man may purify his carnal self, develop rectitude and piety, and create within him the eligibility to present himself before the divine court of Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, Ramad̲ān is like a month of striving, and the months which follow are the months of observing [Allāh's might, power and beauty].

If a person keeps fast as he ought to, his carnal self becomes completely pure. This means that he must not suffice with abstaining from food and drink. Rather, he must safeguard his tongue as well. He must abstain from backbiting, speaking lies, and wasting his time in futile conversations. This is the fast of the tongue. The worship of the ears entails abstaining from listening to backbiting and other futile and useless discussions. The worship of the eyes is that they must not be used to look at impermissible things.

If a person bears all these points in mind, it will be an indication that piety is found in his heart and that he is acquiring the objective of fasting. As for abstaining from the outward sins, this is the first step towards piety. Other levels come after it, viz. he must bear similarity with the angels. He must develop angelic qualities in the sense that he neither eats nor drinks, and remains in the constant remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is obviously a major level. Another level above it is when a person imbibes the qualities of Allāh *taʿālā* because abstaining from food and drink is from among the qualities of Allāh *taʿālā*. A person has these qualities when he is fasting.

Anyway, these are very high stations; leave them for the seniors. If you do just this much, it will be a great achievement. That is, save yourself from acts of disobedience and do not commit sins. This is why I consider it a boon for those who remain sleeping while they are fasting. I think to myself, although they are not carrying out any external acts of obedience, they are at least saved from backbiting and other sins. Although they will receive fewer rewards, their fast will not be unacceptable.

The reason for saying this is that I have personally seen people who are fasting, yet they are occupied in backbiting for several hours at a time. To make matters worse, they do not even consider this to be a sin. In fact, they go to the extent of saying: “Brother! If we do not do this, how will the time of the fast pass?” To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Listen! The Ahlullāh passed the time of the fast in the recitation of the Qur’ān, the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* and in duʿā’. Unfortunately, all these actions do not appeal to you, so you pass your time backbiting and eating the flesh of your fellow brothers. The Qur’ān likens backbiting to eating the flesh of your own brother:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ، وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّأْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ.

O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another

nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.[1]

It is stated in a Hadīth that when a certain person came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he said to the man: "You engaged in backbiting. Consequently I am getting the smell of raw meat emanating from your mouth."

We have seen many people playing cards while fasting. When they are asked about it, they reply: "We are merely passing our time." Obviously when you become distant from Dīn and thereby put an end to your affinity with Allāh's remembrance, recitation of the Qur'ān, etc. then you will spend your fasting day in playing cards and other futile activities. If you give up good actions, they will be replaced by evil activities. If you cast aside the Sunnat, it will certainly be replaced by bidʿat (innovations). This is how these people spend their time: Some of it is spent sleeping, some in backbiting and complaining, and the time after ʿasr is spent in preparing exotic dishes for iftār (opening the fast).

I say, it is certainly permissible to make preparations for iftār, and if it is done with a good intention then it will also earn you rewards. When a fasting person places his food for iftār and sits down in front of it, waiting for the adhān to be called, then Allāh *taʿālā* becomes extremely happy. This is because the person has the desire to eat and drink, the foods are present right in front of him, but he is waiting for Allāh's permission; he is not consuming the food. This demonstrates his total submission and servitude. This is why this action elicits rewards. But for

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 12.

whom? For the person who fulfilled the rights of the fast. That is, all his body parts joined him in the fast. His eyes, tongue, ears, legs, heart and mind all observed the fast. If he abstained from food and drink solely for Allāh's sake, then the time of ifṯār is undoubtedly a time of extreme joy and happiness for him.

A Ḫadīth states:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ.[1]

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and when he will meet Allāh taʿālā.

As for the person who already opened his fast with backbiting, lying, carrying tales, casting evil glances or false oaths before sunset; how can this time of opening the fast be an occasion of joy for him? After all, he has accumulated a large heap of sins on himself. First of all, he opened his fast before the appointed time. Then, when he did open his fast, he did it with something which is ḫarām and unlawful, i.e. with backbiting, carrying tales and so on. He has actually added fuel to the fire. Thirdly, he is even happy over these sins and is under the assumption that his fast is valid and accepted. Whereas, he ought to have cried over his actions, repented, and sought forgiveness. Instead, he is rejoicing over these sins.

On the other hand, the fast of a true and pious believer is such that in addition to saving himself from sins, he keeps away from futile activities. Thus, when he opens his fast, he expresses his thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* for having enabled him to pass his day in

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

His obedience. His joy at the time of ifṯār is not over the ifṯār itself, but over the fact that the fast which is an obligation to Allāh *taʿālā* has been fulfilled in the proper manner. That is, he abstained from sinning throughout the day. His joy at this time is actually an īmānī joy – a joy based on full faith and confidence in Allāh *taʿālā*. After exercising patience of the entire day's tiredness, when he sees the various types of delicacies and bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* placed before him, and receives the permission to consume them, then he – so to speak – says:

> All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we have not died. We have reached our friend. Thousands of praises over this courage of ours.

The reason why we do not value s̲alāh, fasting, etc. is that we are ignorant of the Sharīʿat. The virtues of these actions are found in the Qur'ān and H̲adīth, but we do not speak about them. Now if we do not speak about them, how will the masses come to know of them? And when there is no knowledge of a thing, how can someone practise on it? And if there is no practice, how can the blessings of those good actions be acquired?

Our pious predecessors were not like this. The pious elders and saints used to value the month of Ramad̲ān. They used to pay particular attention to acts of obedience in this month. This is because when a person sets himself correctly in this month and does good actions in it, he is able to remain like that for the rest of the year.

Before giving the Taurāh to H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, Allāh *taʿālā* instructed him to keep fast for one month. This was then increased by another ten days. Consequently, it totalled a fast of 40 days,

although the initial order was for 30 days. When he completed this entire number, Allāh *taʿālā* gave him His Book, the Taurāh.

If you also keep fast as required by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, you will realize and notice that you have indeed received something. The saints used to pay particular attention to these days. They must have gained something for them to have paid so much of attention to them! If this act of worship – fasting – did not have a special status, Allāh *taʿālā* would not have said:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Or as per another narration: "I Myself become the reward for the fasting person."

The elders quote the following Hadīth-e-Qudsī in their writings:

مَنْ قَتَلْتُهُ فَأَنَا دِيَتُهُ

When I kill someone, I Myself become his ransom.

Here the word "kill" refers to killing with love. In other words, the person who obliterates himself in Allāh's love will become connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and remain connected to Him. When a fasting person gives up food, drink and all desires solely for Allāh *taʿālā*, and obliterates his carnal self, then this too is like a killing. Thus, the objective of both Ahādīth is the same, and the words وأنا أجزي به are synonymous to أنا ديته – I am his ransom.

The same Hadīth contains these words:

يَدَعُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِيْ[1]

He gives up his food and drink for My sake.

In other words: Fasting is solely for Me and I become his reward. The reason for this is that this poor fellow left his food, drink and desires for My sake.

Did you see the level of appreciation of Allāh *taʿālā* for your fast! This shows that your abstaining from food and drink is valued and appreciated in His court provided it is done with sincerity. As for the Hadīth in which Allāh *taʿālā* says that He has no regard for his abstaining from food and drink, this is when the fasting person did not fulfil the requirements and prerequisites of the fast, and did not observe the fast as per the demands of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Apart from this, fasting is a most valuable act of worship in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. A Hadīth states in this regard:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ.[2]

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and he will meet Allāh taʿālā.

He will receive the reward for his fasting directly from Allāh *taʿālā*. This too is a part of a Hadīth-e-Qudsī. Although Allāh *taʿālā* is explaining the joy which will be experienced by the fasting person, we learn from it that not only the fasting person but even Allāh *taʿālā*

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[1] الجامع الصغير، ص ٣١٤.

[2] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

is happy over the fact that His servant gave up his food, drink and desires solely for Allāh’s pleasure. Now what can be greater than this?

Listen further:

A Hadīth-e-Qudsī states with reference to iftār:

قَالَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى: أَحَبُّ عِبَادِيْ إِلَيَّ أَعْجَلُهُ فِطْرًا.[1]

Allāh taʿālā said: The most beloved of My servants in My sight is the one who hastens in opening the fast.

Another Hadīth states:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ[2]

People will continue experiencing goodness as long as they hasten in opening the fast.

In other words, when they remain steadfast on this Sunnat, they will be safe from evil and corruption.

Taurbashtī *rahimahullāh* said that the reason for this is that it entails acting against the People of the Book because they wait for the stars to spread out before opening their fast.

Subsequently, this has become the practice of the bidʿatīs of our community. The reason why it is superior and more beloved to hasten in opening the fast is that it is an expression of one’s servitude and submission, and this is most suited to servitude. Furthermore, it is a demonstration of a person

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ۱۷۸.

[2] صحيح البخاري، ص ۳۱۵.

hastening towards the permission [to eat and drink] given by Allāh *taʿālā*.

Taurbashtī *rahimahullāh* says further: In it is proof that the straight path entails following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* strictly. The person who deviates from this is as though he has chosen crookedness and misguidance, even though it is in an act of worship.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also said:

تَسَحَّرُوْا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُوْرِ بَرَكَةً[1]

Partake of the sehrī because there is blessing in it.

The ʿulamā' say that the blessing refers to the acquisition of strength to keep the fast for the day. Another narration states:

اِسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِمُقَايَلَةِ النَّهَارِ عَلٰى قِيَامِ الَّلَيْلِ وَبِأَكْلِ السَّحُوْرِ عَلٰى صِيَامِ النَّهَارِ

Take help from the siesta to spend the night in worship, and from eating at sehrī time to keep fast during the day.

Another meaning of the "blessing" mentioned in the previous Hadīth is that it refers to additional rewards because the person has adopted the way of the Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the difference between our fast and that of the People of the Book is the partaking of sehrī.

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٧٩.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes the following Hadīth:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا أَفْطَرَ قَالَ: اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَعَلٰى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ.[1]

When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to open his fast, he used to say: O Allāh! For You have I fasted and with Your sustenance do I open my fast.

The author then writes:

إِنَّ لِلصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ دَعْوَةً لَا تُرَدُّ.[2]

At the time of opening the fast, the fasting person has a duʿā' which is not rejected.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā' at the time of iftār:

يَا وَاسِعَ الْفَضْلِ اغْفِرْ لِيْ

O the One who possesses immense grace. Forgive me.

He would also say the following:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَعَانَنِيْ فَصُمْتُ، وَرَزَقَنِيْ فَأَفْطَرْتُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who helped me, so I could keep my fast; and gave me sustenance so I could open my fast.

These are the supplications which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made; and you probably never heard them before. You should therefore

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[1] مشكوة: ١٧٥.

[2] ابن ماجه: ١٧٥٣.

practise on this Sunnat. Ensure that you make a duʿā’ at the time of ifṯār because as per the statement of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it is not rejected. The reason for this is that the person kept fast. When his fast is accepted, then the reward for it is that his duʿā’ is accepted. And we already quoted the H̲adīth with regard to the reward for fasting:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

First of all duʿā’ is an act of worship in itself. Then you included it in an act of worship [fasting] which is accepted. Since the fast ends at the time of ifṯār, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā’ at that time. This is so that when this good action [fasting] goes up, the duʿā’ will go up with it.

Bearing in mind that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā*, they are fully aware of His rank and His doings. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this duʿā’ at the end of the fast because this worship [the fast] is accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. He therefore presented his need [duʿā’] with the act [fasting] which is beloved by Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* is most generous and affectionate. He will not accept the fast which is for Him while reject the duʿā’ which is for His servant. The duʿā’ is therefore accepted with the fast. This is why Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā’ at this time and taught his followers how to ask of the Most Generous Allāh. When a person asks in the correct manner, he succeeds in his quest.

It is for this reason I say you must acquire knowledge of the Sunnat because action without knowledge is

not possible. And without knowing the Sunnat, it will be very difficult to tread the path of the Sunnat. Even after bearing many hardships and difficulties, you remain where you are because the path of Allāh *taʿālā* is confined to the path of the Sunnat. Without it, you will not reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

H̲ad̲rat ʿIrbād̲ ibn Sāriyah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates: Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called me to partake of the seh̲rī in the month of Ramad̲ān by saying:

هَلُمَّ إِلَى الْغِذَاءِ الْمُبَارَكِ

Come and partake of this blessed food.

Look! Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is calling it a blessed food. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* wants to feed him, yet there are so many among us who do not partake of seh̲rī and say: "We just have a sip of water. It is enough for us." This is not what Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* wanted of us. In fact, he refers to it as the way of the Jews – that they keep fast but they do not partake of seh̲rī. Partaking of seh̲rī gives strength to the fasting person. This is such a blessed meal that even if you eat a bit extra, the Sharīʿat will not take you to task for it. Just as abstaining from food and drink while fasting during the day is a source of rewards, in the same way partaking of seh̲rī at night [latter part of the night] is a source of rewards.

We learn from this that the fundamental source of reward is obedience to Allāh's orders. When He prohibits us, it will be h̲arām to eat food. When He orders us, then eating will earn us rewards.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how much ease there is in the Sharīʿat. We are made to eat and drink, and we are

conveyed to Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, the Sharīʿat did not ask us to give up an essential thing.

There was a person from our area who used to say: "A certain shaykh provides us with food and drink, and conveys us to Allāh *taʿālā*." When I heard this, I said: "It is possible that he may be conveying you to Allāh *taʿālā*. However, as for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, I can say with certainty that he fed people and conveyed them to Allāh *taʿālā*."

Allāh *taʿālā* made fasting compulsory, so Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked us to hasten in opening the fast and made it a Sunnat to partake of sehrī. In fact, he is calling that Sahābī (Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*) to join him in the sehrī and is referring to it as a blessed food.

There is no act of worship which is as long as fasting. If a person's intention is correct and he abstains from sinning, and fulfils it as ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, then just that one month of Ramadān will convey him to Allāh *taʿālā* and this will be more than enough for him.

However, it is very difficult to keep the fast as it ought to be kept. It is very hard for a person to keep himself safeguarded against all types of sins for the entire day – sins of the eyes, ears, hands, tongue and other body parts. There is no act of worship where a person commits a sin while performing that worship, and it still remains correct and valid. Fasting is a worship which extends for the entire day. It is therefore very difficult for a person to keep all his body parts away from sin for such a long period.

This is why immense rewards have been set aside for the real and genuine fast. But this fast is not easy. It is easy to give up food and drink, but to do this as

ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, this is very difficult; whereas this alone is the accepted fast. If the fast is not as ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, and a person also engages in backbiting and other sins, Allāh *taʿālā* will not look at such a person with mercy. This is because the thing which was <u>h</u>arām for the entire year, he did not give that up. And the thing [food] which was <u>h</u>alāl throughout the year except for the days of fasting, he gave that up. After all, sins are <u>h</u>arām at all times; and they will be even more <u>h</u>arām while in a state of fasting.

It is most appalling to commit sins during these days. First of all because it is the month of Rama<u>d</u>ān. Secondly because you are in a state of fasting. Yet you are backbiting!? I already explained this to you previously:

أَفْطَرَ مَنْ ظَلَّ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ لُحُوْمِ النَّاسِ

The one who spends the day backbiting people has broken his fast.

Similarly, a <u>H</u>adīth states that Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم[1]

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu* who is the narrator of this <u>H</u>adīth said:

لا للحجامة ولكن للغيبة

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[1] مشكوة، ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

The fast did not break on account of cupping, but because they were engaged in backbiting.

Had it been us, we would not have explained all these points to you. But these are the words of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He is explaining to you that the objective of the Sharīʿat is not to merely give up food and drink. Rather, the objective is to acquire taqwā through fasting. Now you yourself can check how much of taqwā you have acquired.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly got hold of the real thief when he said: "When a person does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, the fast will not reach Allāh *taʿālā*." If it is not accepted in Allāh's court, it will not be accepted in the court of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The joy which a fasting person experiences at the time of opening his fast, as mentioned in the Hadīth, is for that person who kept the fast as it ought to be kept. This is because the joy which he is referring to at the time of iftār is actually a conglomeration of two joys. One is a physical joy which is experienced at being able to eat and drink. Thus, when you partake of the meal at iftār, see how much you relish it. You can understand this by eating the same foods out of Ramadān. You will not experience the same enjoyment as you did when you ate them at the time of opening your fast. So this is the physical joy. The other joy at the time of iftār is the spiritual joy which is experienced by a believer. He experiences joy over the fact that he was able to carry out an order of Allāh *taʿālā*. He – so to speak – says:

> All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we have not died. We have reached our

friend. Thousands of praises over this courage of ours.

When a pious believer completes his fast and saves himself from sins, he experiences a special joy in īmān. He thinks to himself: I had to endure the pain of hunger, thirst and acting against my desires in this world; but I carried out Allāh's order as instructed by Him. I thus made my fast eligible for:

فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به[1]

It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Obviously this is no small joy. When a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* performs salāh, keeps fast, or carries out any other order of Allāh *taʿālā* in the prescribed manner, then there can be no greater happiness than it. He experiences such spiritual joy that all physical joys are nothing compared to it.

No matter what, to keep a fast and to keep it in the correct manner is not any less of a joy. Yes, it is certainly difficult. When a servant's action is accepted on account of his sincerity, then everything else is accepted. And when something is accepted, Allāh *taʿālā* is most appreciative of it.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was leading the people in salāh. A Sahābī uttered something from the back. After the salāh, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "Who spoke?" All the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* remained silent, and the one who uttered something also got scared. But because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked, he said: "I was the one." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ١٧٣.

ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Your words were so beloved by Allāh *taʿālā* that 12 angels were fighting against each other to take those words up to the heavens."

Similarly, when a person's fast is accepted in Allāh's court, then whatever results from it is also beloved by Allāh *taʿālā*. You just heard how Allāh *taʿālā* loves the fasting person's abstention from food, drink and desires. In the same way, even the smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person and which is so disliked by others becomes more beloved to Allāh *taʿālā* than the fragrance of musk.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

وَلَخَلُوْفُ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ رِيْحِ الْمِسْكِ

The smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved in the sight of Allāh taʿālā then the fragrance of musk.

This is similar to jihād in the cause of Allāh *taʿālā* which is most beloved in His sight. Consequently, even the excreta and urine of the mujāhid's horse has great value in Allāh's sight. A Hadīth states that on the day of Resurrection everything [used by a mujāhid] will be placed on the scales and weighed, and he will be rewarded for it. This is because due to one action, the one who carried out the action is also accepted and valued. Then when he is accepted, everything attached to him will also be valued. In other words, anything which has the slightest relationship with him is accepted.

This is why I say that the path is very easy. There is no need for too much of striving. I ask you to just put salāh and fasting in order. In other words, perform salāh at its appointed time, and keep fast after believing it to be an order of Allāh *taʿālā*. During

these days [of Ramadān], abstain from food, drink, desires, and all sins whether minor or major. Become obedient to the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*. You will then see the immense enjoyment which you will experience, and how much you will be honoured by Allāh *taʿālā*.

The Ahlullāh visually observe how much proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* they are blessed with, and how much their hearts become purified through fasting.

We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to keep fast together with its etiquette and prerequisites. Āmīn.

RAMADĀN ASSEMBLY (1)

A Hadīth states:

أدبوا أولادكم على ثلاث خصال، حب نبيكم، وحب أهل بيته، وقرأة القرآن، فإن حملة القرآن في ظل الله يوملا ظل إلا ظله مع أنبيائه وأصفيائه.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: Teach three things to your children: (1) Love for your Prophet. (2) Love for his family. (3) Recitation of the Qur'ān because the bearers of the Qur'ān will be in Allāh's shade on the day when there will no shade other than His shade. They will be in the company of the Prophets and His chosen servants.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* teaches us to teach and discipline our children in three things. This is an address to parents and grandparents to teach them these things. The address includes guardians of children. It means that they must be taught these things from a young age so that they become accustomed to them and grow up with these qualities. They must be so firmly embedded in them that they settle in their hearts and minds, they uphold them forever, and they are never separated from them in the course of their lives.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* listed these three specifically because it is extremely important for children to be taught them from the beginning.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ١، ص ٢٢٩.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made the teaching of these things obligatory on parents and guardians. The first is to create love and respect for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in their hearts. It is the duty of parents and guardians to supervise their children in this regard. Love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is obligatory because accepting the Sharīʿat he came with, doing what he instructed us to do and abstaining from what he prohibited to us are dependent on love for him. It is love for him which will prompt us to do all this. The principle is that a person obeys the one whom he loves. Once he develops love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, his heart will look up to the Sharīʿat which he came with. The love will prevent him from acting against his orders. The foundation of Dīn – love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – has been made obligatory on us; and parents and guardians are required to develop and ingrain that love in their children. By doing this, practising on Dīn becomes easy.

Now listen to what the scholars say in the explanation of this Hadīth:

Samʿānī *rahimahullāh* says that it is obligatory on parents to teach their children that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*, he was commissioned in Makkah, he was sent as a Prophet to all of mankind and jinn, he passed away in Madīnah and was buried there. It is also necessary to teach them that it is obligatory to obey and love him.

Children should first be taught about the Oneness of Allāh

Ibn Qayyim *rahimahullāh* says that the first thing which should fall in the ears of children is the Oneness of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is obligatory to teach them this first. For example, by saying to them: Allāh is One. Allāh is faultless. Allāh is the sole creator. Allāh alone is the master. Allāh alone is the provider.

They must be taught that He hears everything and that He is with them all the time and everywhere. His knowledge is all-encompassing. It is for this reason that the best names to be kept are ʿAbdullāh and ʿAbd ar-Rahmān. The moment a child can understand, he must know that Allāh *taʿālā* is one, and that he is Allāh's servant.

After teaching a child tauhīd, it is the duty of parents to teach him about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He must be told that it is obligatory to love Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If parents do not do this, they will be sinning.

You are listening to me talking and you probably thinking to yourself that these are small and insignificant things. Why is he telling us these things? Why doesn't he speak on more complex issues?

I say, these are not small things. Not understanding these things has caused your own downfall. You do not know even these basics of Islam but you want to know about objectives and wisdoms. How can you fathom the objectives without knowing the fundamentals? Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying that you must teach these things to your children. It is an obligatory duty on parents and

guardians. Yet you are considering them to be insignificant!?

I cannot describe how much joy I experience when I speak on these topics. This is because I think that I have said something useful and noteworthy. If I were to speak on topics which you consider to be more challenging, I feel grieved because I know they are beyond you. Although you may enjoy listening to them, they are beyond you to put them into practice. My brains would get tired and you would not have benefited in any way. This would cause me sorrow.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was a mentor in the true sense of the word. This is why he used to explain fundamentals and basics with the same importance as he would objectives. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them and reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn. (compiler)

Teach children the love for Rasūlullāh's family

The second point which this Hadīth mentions is the need to teach children the love for Rasūlullāh's family. The Hadīth uses the words "Ahl-e-Bayt". This could refer specifically to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Fātimāh *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, Hadrat Hasan *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*; or to all his family members.

The third point mentioned in this Hadīth is for parents and guardians to teach the Qur'ān to their children. It includes teaching them to read the Qur'ān, memorize it, and other sciences related to the Qur'ān. The same Hadīth gives the glad tidings of shade under Allāh's Throne for those who bear the Qur'ān. This will be on a day when there will be no shade apart from the shade provided by Allāh *taʿālā*.

On that day, the bearers of the Qur'ān will be in the company of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and other selected servants of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Now listen to what the scholars said in this regard.

Definition of bearers of the Qur'ān

The bearers of the Qur'ān as mentioned in this Hadīth refer to those who gave a place to the Qur'ān in their hearts. In other words, they memorize it, read it regularly and practise on its injunctions. They are the ones who will be in Allāh's shade. The reason for being in Allāh's shade on the day of Resurrection is that even when they were in this world, they were in the shade of the Qur'ān by virtue of memorizing it, reading it and practising on it. They will receive a full reward for it. The words "the day when there will no shade other than His shade" refer to the day of Resurrection when the sun will be hovering above the heads of people, and its intense heat will render them restless. There will be no shade on that day. Allāh *taʿālā* will honour the bearer of the Qur'ān by giving him a place in the shade of His Throne.

The words "shadow of Allāh" could also refer to the shade in Paradise. This means that they will be in Paradise where they will be enjoying its bounties. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَّنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيْلًا

We shall enter them in a dense shade.[1]

Another meaning is that these people will be in the close proximity of the shade of Allāh's mercy. In other

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 57.

words, they will be safe and protected from the miseries of that day. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

This will be one honour which will be conferred to the bearers of the Qur'ān. The other is that they will be allowed to remain in the close company of Allāh's special and selected servants. Thus, firstly Allāh *taʿālā* will be their companion because they had a special bond with His Book while they were in the world. Because they had imbibed their qualities, they will be in their company in the Hereafter.

You heard the Hadīth and the explanations of the scholars. Now listen to the rules which the scholars derived from this Hadīth. They say:

We learn the obligation of teaching children. We are especially obligated to seeing to their discipline, teaching them certain things, and paying special attention to their religious training. The scholars add:

وانه حق لازم

Disciplining and educating children is their right which they have over their parents and guardians. Anyone who is put in charge of a child has to fulfil this obligation.

We are negligent as regards Dīnī education

You are not aware of your responsibilities. Whatever we spoke about has another name, and that is Dīnī education which is obligatory on you. Yet you come and complain to us about irreligiousness. You handed over your children to the schools, and when they become spoilt and disobedient, you come and complain to us. Do you think I do not understand these things? You ask me the way to rectification, so I am explaining to you that this was the way in which

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* trained his Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. He said:

أدبوا أولادكم على ثلاث خصال

Teach three things to your children…

Why do you not practise on this teaching? Did you carry out these instructions and then saw them causing misguidance? Or is it that you are seeing this bad day because you are discarding these teachings? Why don't you take steps towards rectification after having learnt your mistake?

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying that these are obligatory duties on the parents and guardians. Just as parents have rights over their children, so do children have over their parents. In fact, they have more rights; and that right is of educating, training, tutoring and disciplining them.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* spoke the truth without bothering if anyone feels offended or not. This ought to be the mark of mentors and reformers. If only the Muslim community could practise on this Sunnat. If they did, the mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* will shower on them.

اِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

Surely Allāh's mercy is close to those who do good.

(compiler)

The consequence of neglecting Dīnī education

فمن أهمل تعليم ولده ما ينفعه فقد أساء إليه.

The person who abstains from teaching his children whatever will be of use to them has in fact committed a serious wrong against them.

وأكثر عقوق الأولاد آخرًا لسبب الإهمال أولًا

In most cases, children are eventually disobedient to their parents when the latter were neglectful in educating them from the beginning.

Glory to Allāh! You cannot imagine how much I enjoy reading and speaking on themes of this nature. When I explain these points to you, I think to myself that I have served you.

The author says that those who are neglectful as regards the education of their children should not think that the harmful consequences of it will not befall them. No. In fact, when children become totally disobedient to their parents later on in life, it is because parents had been careless as regards their education when their children were young. It is as though they are getting a "full recompense" when their children become recalcitrant and disregard the rights of their parents.

The author says further on:

ومن ثم قال بعضهم لأبيه أضعتني وليدا فأضعتك شيخا.

This is why a son said to his father: You neglected me when I was a child so I neglected you in your old-age.

Note: The fact is clear before us. Every person has to strive to fulfil the duties which the Sharī'at has imposed on him. This can turn the world into a garden of Paradise. If not, it will be an example of the Hell-fire. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā.*

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire each one to fulfil the rights and duties which he is obligated to fulfil so that everyone can be saved from corruption. Āmīn. (compiler)

RAMADĀN ASSEMBLY (2)

It is stated in *Tarsīʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* that Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Ghanī Tarābulisī *rahimahullāh* said in his book *Fath Rabbānī Wa Fayd Subhānī* that the attainment of perfect īmān is within a person's choice. It can be acquired by adopting the means and abstaining from the prohibitions. The means are the good deeds because perfect īmān is the result of good deeds. As for the prohibitions and obstacles, they are the evil characteristics which are within the selves, e.g. ostentation, showing off, egotism, etc. One of the things which enables a person to acquire perfect īmān is the company of those who have it. That is, remaining in the company of the ʿulamā', righteous and genuine Sufis; and having respect for them. A person must be sincere in his confidence in them and be convinced that they are from among the effects of divinity. They do not have the power to do on their own accord, rather, they are Allāh's treasures on Allāh's earth. He placed some of His mysteries in them. As for the keys to all those treasures, they are solely in the hands of Allāh *taʿālā.* He will, out of His grace, open them to whomever He wills. And He can shut them off from whomever He wills. If the latter happens, they will neither be able to acquire any blessings from Him nor convey blessings to others.

Another thing which helps a person in acquiring perfect īmān is the books of the Sufi masters. Studying their books can also enable a person to acquire perfect īmān.

The words of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Tarābulisī *rahimahullāh* end here. It's a beautiful quotation. I related it several times before and related

it to you today so that we can speak about significant things. I see people engaging in futile discussions, so I thought I should speak something noteworthy. You have already heard the words of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Tarābulisī *rahimahullāh*. Now listen to another important point.

This is a book of jurisprudence. It is titled *Mā Lā Budda Minhu*. Towards the end of this book, the author Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānī Pattī *rahimahullāh* has a chapter which he names Kitāb al-Ihsān. Normally such a chapter is not found in a book of jurisprudence. You will find chapters on purity, salāh, zakāh and so on; but I haven't come across Kitāb al-Ihsān in any book of jurisprudence. The word ihsān refers to the same thing which is related in a Hadīth known as Hadīth-e-Jibra'īl. Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and asked him a few questions. For example: What is Islam? What is īmān? What is ihsān? After explaining the rules of Islam and īmān, Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* goes into a brief discussion on ihsān. This [*Mā Lā Budda Minhu*] is an excellent book but people rarely teach it nowadays. This should not be the case.

The author writes:

Listen! May Allāh *taʿālā* guide you. Whatever has been explained thus far was related to only the outer form of Islam, īmān and the Sharīʿat. In other words, it was an explanation of the external Sharīʿat. As for the core and essence of īmān, Islam and the Sharīʿat, you will have to search for its reality from the dervishes. If you want to acquire the spirit and internal form of Dīn, you will not find it in books. It is

to be found in the chests of the Sufis. You can only acquire it by remaining in their company.

The company of the Sufis is necessary to acquire i<u>h</u>sān

I first quoted the statement of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī <u>T</u>arābulisī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* to you. In it he said that the company of the Sufis is an aid to acquiring perfect īmān. His words read as follows:

وهما يعين على تحصيله صحبة أهله وخدمتهم واحترامهم والإخلاص في اعتقادهم.

Qā<u>d</u>ī Thanā'ullāh <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is saying that the only way to acquire the soul of Islam, īmān and the Sharīʿat (in other words, perfection) is through the service and company of the dervishes. Furthermore, <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat <u>H</u>akīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*:

Each of the auliyā' followed strictly in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – each one according to his status – in a manner that one could not reach the level of the other. In fact, he does not even understand the rank of the other. The Qur'ān too says in this regard:

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلٰى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

How will you be able to bear with me when you will see things that you are unable to comprehend?[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 68.

If there is going to be rejection in such a case, it will result in severe deprivation because a rejecter is always disgraced.

من أنكرهم ضل واعتدى.

The author of *'Awārif* says that the person who rejects the auliyā' has gone astray and transgressed the limits. As for the one who affirms the auliyā', although he has not reached their rank, there is hope that his affirmation which he extended to these personalities will convey him to perfection and make him a true recognizer of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Look! He is saying with reference to the person who affirms the auliyā' and believes in them that he will reach a level of perfection. Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful statement! Look at how easy he made the path. I ask you, will a person who sits in the company of those who have acquired affirmation not acquire affirmation as well? He will certainly acquire it. We learn from this that affirmation is an act of the heart. There can be no other way of acquiring it apart from the company of the Sufis. The Sufis concur that whatever a person acquires in this path does it on the basis of companionship. In fact, the scholars say with reference to the intellect: Although it is a natural gift, it does increase through the company of intelligent people, studying the books of wisdom, and reading the biographies of intelligent people.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *al-Qaul al-Jamīl* on the prerequisites of a shaykh. He states:

The fifth condition is that the person accepting bay'at must have remained in the company of Sufi experts and learnt etiquette from them. He must have

acquired internal effulgence and tranquillity over a long period of time from them. The prerequisite of the company of the righteous has been laid down because it has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that the objective cannot be acquired without having spent time in the company of those who have acquired it. This is in the same way as knowledge cannot be acquired without the company of the ʿulamāʾ. The same rule can be applied to learning the art of the ironmonger and carpenter from the masters in these respective arts.[1]

We learn from this that companionship is a lofty station on the path. At the same time, it is necessary to note that it can only be beneficial if it is accompanied by sincerity and affirmation. Affirmation is essential. It is affirmation which will convey the seeker to perfection and make him a true gnostic. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

اَلَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

Those who affirm the day of Recompense.

The word "tasdīq" is mentioned in it. In most places, the Qur'ān uses the word "yu'minūn" (who believe), but here the word "yusaddiqūn" is used.

What this means is that companionship which is accompanied with sincerity and affirmation is an intrinsic ingredient for success. It is so influential that it will not be wrong to refer to it as the actual path. This is because we explained previously that in perfect īmān, good deeds are the causes while bad characteristics are the obstacles to the perfection of

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[1] *Al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, p. 21.

īmān. Even for these two, companionship is most beneficial. Through it a seeker is prompted towards good actions, and because of it he gets the courage to remove evil characteristics from himself. The process of purification and reformation which a seeker goes through becomes easy through companionship. When he sees the submission, humility, consideration and uprightness of a saint, his heart is prompted towards these qualities. It is from this point that the path is opened to him and he realizes his objective.

I am explaining a very important and vital theme. If you listen to it with your heart, you will understand many of the statements and actions of the saints. Your heart will then focus on Allāh *taʿālā* while you are living in this world among your wife and children. If you do not listen to it, you will have to suffer the evil consequences.

I have spoken quite a bit on this subject. I was saying to you that Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote that you must search for the essence of the Sharīʿat – which is also known as the Haqīqat – in the company of the saints and acquire it from them. He then solves a major issue. Listen attentively.

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says: "Don't ever think that the Haqīqat is something separate from the Sharīʿat. Allāh forbid, thinking in this way is absolute ignorance and unbelief. Instead, the Tarīqat and Haqīqat are not opposite entities from the Sharīʿat. Rather, it is a part of the Sharīʿat when the heart is divested of all apart from Allāh *taʿālā* through the blessing of going to the service of the saints and remaining in their company. In other words, the heart is cleansed of the bonds which are obstacles to establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, the

evils of the carnal self are removed to turn it into a self which has acquired tranquillity (*nafs-e-mutma'innah*), and sincerity and affirmation are then created in man. The Sharīʿat then becomes the core for such a person, and his external actions become weighty because they are supported by the heart. The person then reaches a level where:

His two rakʿats of salāh are superior to the 100 000 rakʿats of those who are not of this level. The same can be said of his fasting, charity and other acts of worship.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that if you (non-Sahābah) were to spend gold equal to Mt. Uhud in charity, it will not equal the half kilo of barley which was given by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* in Allāh's cause. The difference is obviously because of the difference in īmān and sincerity. The level of sincerity and īmān which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* had acquired by virtue of the company of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can never be acquired by non-Sahābah. The greatest of saints cannot reach the level which was reached by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum.*

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes further:

Search for the internal effulgence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the chests of the dervishes. In other words, you must acquire it by remaining in their company. You must illuminate your heart through it so that you develop genuine insight through which you can fathom every right and wrong and differentiate between the two.

He adds:

The Qur'ān refers to a walī (friend of Allāh) as a "muttaqī" – a righteous or Allāh-conscious person.

The Hadīth states that one of the signs of a walī is that his company reminds you of Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, by sitting in his company, love for this world is decreased and love for Allāh *taʿālā* increases. Thus, the person who is not a muttaqī cannot be a walī. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that there are many devils in the garb of humans. You should therefore not pledge allegiance to all and sundry. Hadrat ʿAzīzān ʿAlī Rāmītnī *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme in the following couplets:

> Beware of the person from whose company you do not acquire spiritual concentration, and through whom worldly bonds are not severed. Run far away from his company. If not, my soul will not pardon you for this crime of yours.[1]

The author writes as a footnote to the above:

You must flee from the one from whom you perceive harm, e.g. a person who does not adhere to the Sharīʿat. As for the person who appears to be righteous, there is no harm in choosing to remain in his company and pledging allegiance to him. In other words, the least is that there is no fear of harm, irrespective of whether you benefit from him or not. If such a person's company has an effect on you, and that effect is considered reliable by the scholars of the external and internal sciences, then you must believe his company to be an elixir and a boon. If his company does not show any effect or it is not considered acceptable by the seniors, you must stay aloof from his company while having noble thoughts about him. You must then seek the path to Allāh

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[1] *Mā Lā Budda Minhu*, p. 173.

taʿālā from someone else because the objective is Allāh *taʿālā* and not any specific person.

Note: Unfortunately this rule no longer exists in the Sufi path. Everything has been reduced to customs. The original path of Sufism has been discarded. (compiler)

The effect which is reliable according to the seniors is this:

His company creates a condition due to which love for this world ceases while love for Allāh *taʿālā*, attachment to good deeds, inspiration to do good and abstain from evil, and disregard for evil is created in the heart. Furthermore, his company brings upon the condition which is described in a Hadīth:

إذا رأوا ذكر الله.

When you look at them, you think of Allāh taʿālā.

The person experiences tranquillity of the heart in Allāh's remembrance and internal focus. As he does more and more good deeds, he experiences an increase in his spiritual bond and condition. When he commits a sin, he feels restless and agitated; and a defect in the bond which he had acquired through the saint. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when you experience joy at doing good actions and sorrow at doing evil actions, you must conclude that you are a true believer.

Look at how the scholars described the need for good company and its effect. I said previously that the scholars concur that anyone who succeeded in this path did so through the company of seniors. It is undoubtedly a true statement.

Listen further.

Khān S̲āh̲ib said that Miyājī ʿAz̲īmullāh was a resident of Khaurjah. He was not an educated person. He knew some basic Persian and he used to teach children. However, he had been in the company of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* and was his disciple. This is why he had a deep understanding of Dīn. He spoke about the issue of *tas̲awwur-e-shaykh* (where a disciple thinks about and conjures thoughts about his shaykh). He said that the power of conveying spiritual blessings was extremely strong in Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why his mere teaching was enough for the internal rectification of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* and they had no need to occupy themselves in the spiritual practices which are in vogue among the Sufis. They reached spiritual heights without those practices. After Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, this strength waned over a period of time to the point that the Sufis had to resort to spiritual practices for spiritual rectification. This is why they chose this route.[1]

Look! He clearly states that because the power of conveying blessings was strong in Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, just being in his company was enough for the spiritual rectification of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum*. They did not need to engage in excessive meditation and other spiritual practices. When this capability weakened over time, other practices were needed for spiritual reformation. The fundamental force is the ability to convey spiritual blessings. This is why those who came after the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* were not referred to as S̲ah̲ābah; they were known as Tābiʿīn. Those who

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[1] *Arwāh̲ Thalāthah*, p. 150.

had the opportunity of being in the company of the Tābiʿīn were not known as that, but as Tabaʿ Tābiʿīn. With the changing of the ability to convey blessings, the names also changed. Dhikr and other spiritual practices are aids in the spiritual path. The fundamental influencer is the ability to convey spiritual blessings. This is what Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* refers to:

> It is the same light which has been coming down continuously from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* You will have to go the saints, remain in their service and acquire that light from them.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a senior lecturer at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. He used to say: "I cannot go to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* because he is in Makkah. This is why I say to Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* to undertake my training, but they are not listening to me. When I ask them to give me leave from my teaching so that I could go to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib in Makkah, they do not give me leave. They say that if I leave the madrasah, it will have a detrimental effect on it."

Later on, when both personalities were going for hajj, they took Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* with them. After all, he was the son of their teacher. The father of Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was Hadrat Maulānā Mamlūk ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was the teacher of Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib

rahimahullāh. When the two completed the hajj and were about to leave for Madīnah, they said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: “He (Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib) will stay here and remain in your company.” Hadrat *rahimahullāh* replied: “Very well, but tell him he must remain focused with his heart and abstain from speaking.” When the two returned from Madīnah Munawwarah, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* complained about Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib saying: “I asked him to do just one thing and he could not do that much. (i.e. to abstain from speaking). When any person asked me a question, he would answer without waiting for a reply from me.”

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* relates: “Despite this, because his shaykh [Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*] was an expert, he conveyed Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib to such a high level of spirituality that when he returned to India, he tutored many people to become Sufi masters.”

Note: Did you see the effect of the company of the saints. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to choose their company with sincerity and inspire us towards good deeds. Āmīn. (compiler)

RAMAḎĀN ASSEMBLY (3)

Allāh *taʿālā* describes Himself in the Qur'ān. He also describes man to us. He says:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ. يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ. إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid which issues from between the loins and the chest. Surely He has the power to bring him back.[1]

Listen! No one can ever describe Allāh *taʿālā* and man in the manner in which Allāh *taʿālā* did in the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says with utmost displeasure:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ.

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation. He says: "Who will give life to the bones when they have crumbled to dust?"[2]

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ.

Say: "He will give life to them who had created them the first time. And He knows every creation."[3]

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ.

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[1] Sūrah aṯ-Ṯāriq, 86: 5-8.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 78.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 79.

He who made for you fire out of a green tree, you then kindle [your fires] therewith.[1]

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ.

Is, then, He who created the heavens and the earth not able to create someone like them? Why not! He alone is the actual creator, the all-knowing.[2]

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ.

His command is merely this, when He wills to do something He says to it: 'Be!' and it immediately becomes.[3]

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُون.

Pure is that being in whose hands is the dominion of everything, and it is to Him that you will be returned.[4]

You people may be thinking that you read Sūrah Yā Sīn every morning and that it is part of your daily practice. Listen! Read the Qur'ān as the Qur'ān. In other words, read it with your heart and with full conviction, and then see how much you will enjoy it. Unfortunately, you people read it as though it is an Urdu book. What effect will it have on you!?

Look at with what force Allāh *taʿālā* is saying:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 80.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 81.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 82.

[4] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 83.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Because Allāh *taʿālā* is the sole Creator, He alone can say this. If man was doing the rectification, he could never say such a thing. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator, therefore he can say it frankly. This is also a clear proof that Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator. He said something which no human could say. People would hesitate to utter such a thing and feel ashamed. They will fear that their addressee will feel offended. On the other hand, Allāh *taʿālā* says forthrightly:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّآءٍ دَافِقٍ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid.[2]

A saint said: "I remain with my head lowered because I did things which, when I think of them, I feel ashamed." Allāh *taʿālā* speaks of things which will cause one to lower his head. There is certainly nothing more powerful to break his pride, arrogance and self-claims. The Qur'ān speaks on these matters. Allāh *taʿālā* describes Himself and man in the Qur'ān. It is easy for someone to say that He is the Sustainer of mankind, so He ought to speak about these things. Now look further:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

[2] Sūrah aṯ-Ṯāriq, 86: 5-6.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ. أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا. ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا. فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا. وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا. وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا. وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا. وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا. مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ.

Let man, then, reflect on his food: We poured the water, falling from above. We then cleaved the earth asunder. Thereupon We caused grain to grow therein. And grapes and edible plants. And olives and dates. And gardens of dense foliage. And fruits and pastures. Of use to you and to your cattle.[1]

Nowadays people are attracted to lectures only. I ask you, what are you going to do with that? You need to develop Allāh-recognition, and this is a work of the heart, not of the tongue. Who bothers about those who restrict themselves to the tongue? A single doer is superior to a thousand prattlers. Take the case of a single person who has a thousand people singing his praises. He is nothing but a talker. One doer of actions is superior to the former even though he may not talk a lot.

When Hadrat ʿUthmān *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was appointed as the caliph, he climbed the pulpit, delivered a short speech and fell silent. After quite some time, he added:

أنتم إلى إمام فعال أحوج منكم إلى إمام قوال.

You are more in need of a leader who is a doer than a leader who is a talker.

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[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 24-32.

What he meant was that he was a leader who does, not one who talks a lot. And this is what you people need.

Cognition is an action of the heart

Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* has a chapter in which he states that cognition is an action of the heart. The chapter is titled thus:

باب قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنا أعلمكم بالله وأن المعرفة فعل القلب لقول الله تعالى عز وجل وَلٰكِنْ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* comments on the above by saying that Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* quotes a verse to prove that īmān is not perfected by the tongue alone, to the exclusion of the heart. He says that belief is an action of the heart. (Just as cognition is an action of the heart).

You have just read what the scholars are saying, i.e. cognition is an act of the heart. Yet people assume that it is an act of the tongue and that the person who is a good talker is a gnostic. In the same way, the addressee assumes it to be an act of the ear. The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes with reference to this verse:

وَلٰكِنْ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ

Rather, He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned.

He says that although this verse was revealed with reference to īmān, it is clearly and certainly presentable as a proof for cognition because both

share the same meaning in the sense that both are actions of the heart.

Now listen to a Hadīth. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أبغض الخلق إلى الله تعالى من كانت ثيابه ثياب الأنبياء وعمله عمل الجبارين.[1]

The most abhorred person in the sight of Allāh taʿālā is the one who wears the clothing of Prophets while his actions are of tyrants.

This means that his acts of worship point to his being an ascetic and righteous person, but his actions are like those of tyrants and oppressors. The latter oppress and tyrannize the creation out of their pride, and forget the favours of Allāh *taʿālā* on them. They do not have an iota of mercy, and they accumulate of this world through their tyranny and oppression.

ʿAllāmah Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh* says that a *jabbār* (tyrant) is one who does as he wants, beats whomever he wants, kills whomever he wants and wrongs whomever he wants without bothering in the least about the consequences. Another definition of a *jabbār* is that he is an arrogant person who does not submit to the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*. The most beloved in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* are the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the truthful ones. The most abhorred in His sight is the one who imitates them outwardly, while he is not like them in his actions and character. If a person imitates the sincere and

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[1] كشف الخفاء، ج ١، ص ٢٤.

devoted servants superficially while he is ostentatious, then he is certainly abhorred. After all, he is wearing the garments of righteous people but acting in total opposition to them. The above Hadīth demonstrates the despicability of this action.

Take note of another point here:

أحب الصالحين ولست منهم – لعل الله يرزقني صلاحا

I love the righteous although I am not of them. Perhaps Allāh will bless me with righteousness.

The imitation mentioned in this couplet is not prohibited. In other words, if a person loves righteous people, wears garments like theirs, and imitates their ways so that he may become like them; then this is certainly a commendable thing.

I heard Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* relating the story of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* with the magicians. When they came to compete with him, they asked him: "Will you cast first or should we cast our magic first?" In order to prove the truth and disprove their falsehood, he asked them to cast first. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* then cast his staff on the ground and it turned into a serpent which began swallowing the small snakes of the magicians. Everyone was terrified. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* himself became scared. This is why the magicians accepted īmān at his hands. They realized that Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* is not a magician because a magician does not become frightened by his own magic. When they saw Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* becoming scared, they concluded that this is a miracle solely from Allāh *taʿālā*. They embraced īmān once they realized this. Pharaoh tried his utmost to threaten them but they

did not waver in the least. The Qur’ān relates this incident very beautifully:

قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰى إِمَّآ أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّآ أَنْ نَّكُوْنَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقٰى.

They said: “O Mūsā! Either you cast or we will be the first to cast.”

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوْا ج فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى.

He said: “No, you cast [first].” By their enchantment, it appeared to him that their ropes and staffs were moving rapidly.

فَأَوْجَسَ فِيْ نَفْسِهِ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى.

Mūsā then conceived fear within himself.

قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الأَعْلٰى. وَأَلْقِ مَا فِيْ يَمِيْنِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوْا ط إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوْا كَيْدَ سٰحِرٍ ط وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتٰى.

We said: “Do not fear, you shall certainly remain triumphant. Cast what is in your right hand, it will swallow all that they have made. That which they made is only a magician’s trick. The magician does not succeed wherever he goes.”

فَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوْآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هٰرُوْنَ وَمُوْسٰى.

The magicians then fell into prostration [and] said: “We believe in the Sustainer of Hārūn and Mūsā.”

قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ط إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ج فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَأُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِيْ جُذُوْعِ النَّخْلِ ز وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَآ أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَّأَبْقٰى.

Pharaoh said: "Do you believe in him before I can permit you? Surely he must be your master who taught you magic. So I will now cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides and I will crucify you on the trunks of date-palms. You will come to know whose punishment from us is severer and more lasting."

قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلٰى مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالَّذِيْ فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَآ أَنْتَ قَاضٍ ؕ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا.

They said: "Never shall we prefer you to the clear signs that have reached us and to Him who created us. Decree, then, whatever you want to decree. You can only decree in this worldly life."

إِنَّآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطٰيٰنَا وَمَآ أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ وَّأَبْقٰى.

"We have brought faith in our Sustainer so that He may forgive us our sins and the magic which you compelled upon us. Allāh is best and everlasting."[1]

Look at how the magicians acquired the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. The scholars say that this was as a recompense for the respect which they gave to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Because they treated a senior Prophet with respect, Allāh *taʿālā* did not keep them deprived of the blessings of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Instead, He placed the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* in their hearts. The scholars write further that this was also a blessing of their external imitation of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* because

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[1] Sūrah Ṯā Hā, 20: 65-73.

when they came for the competition, they dressed as Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* did.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said to Allāh *taʿālā*: "I was commissioned to Pharaoh but he died as an unbeliever while the magicians were guided to Islam. What is the wisdom behind this?" Allāh *taʿālā* replied: "The magicians had adopted your dress so I could not see Myself punishing My enemies who are dressed like My beloved. By virtue of this superficial similarity, we caused their hearts to be joined with yours." Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point.

Thus, we see that there is an imitation which is also praiseworthy and desirable. The other is the one through which a person becomes the most abhorred in Allāh's sight. There is a world of difference between the two.

I was saying to you that cognition is an action of the heart. When cognition enters the heart, the other body parts submit before Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Tarsīʿ* says that the reality of man which makes him man and separates him from animals is the heart. It is the heart which rules over other parts of the body. No body part can act against the dictates of the heart. A Hadīth states:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله. ألا وهي القلب.[1]

There is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it is sound, the rest of the body will be sound. But if it is

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[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب الإيمان.

unsound, the rest of the body will be unsound. It is the heart.

We learn from this Hadīth that the soundness and corruption of the entire body is dependent on the soundness and corruption of the heart. The soundness of the heart lies in it being filled with īmān and sincerity. Once this is realized, its effects will certainly be seen externally. I say, the Qur'ān is the source of this Hadīth. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to salāh:

وَاِنَّهَا لَكَبِيْرَةٌ اِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِيْنَ.

Salāh is certainly difficult except on those who have humility.

Allāh *taʿālā* is Himself saying that salāh is a difficult thing – externally and internally. The external difficulty is in the sense that it has to be performed on time and with congregation. It is internally difficult because it has to be performed with the heart focussing on Allāh *taʿālā*. A person has to empty his heart of whisperings and other thoughts while in salāh. Salāh is not the place where a person can turn his attention to anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. This internal focus is extremely difficult. It is with reference to this aspect that Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِيْنَ

…except on those who have humility.

Focus with the heart is not difficult on those who have humility and Allāh's fear. Humility is an action of the heart. When a heart has Allāh's remembrance and cognition – and we already said that the heart is

the ruler – then the rest of the body parts will also submit.

The Qur'ān attributes humility to the heart. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللهِ.

Has the time not come for the believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

We learn from this that humility is in the heart. A saint said:

> O Allāh! Bless me with the restlessness of true love. Bless our eyes with tears and confer our hearts with servitude.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the beautiful manner in which he expressed this reality. He attributed tears to the eyes and servitude to the heart. It is the same humility which reduces the difficulty of salāh. We conclude that when the heart is in order, the external body parts will follow suite. Now look for yourself. Where people reach their destination after many years of travelling, Allāh *taʿālā* conveys them in a minute. I say, if you do not develop humility in your heart, it is not possible for you to practise on the Qur'ān. As long as a person does not have a sound heart, he will not be able to read the Qur'ān as it ought to be read. The Qur'ān contains injunctions about everything. When the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* is read with the heart, the injunctions will descend into the heart. Recitation of the Qur'ān is prescribed for this purpose.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hadīd, 57: 16.

Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Sāhib Maungerī *rahimahullāh* was a senior scholar and saint. He was a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Fadl Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. Someone asked him, "Hadrat, how are you feeling?" He replied: "What you are asking about how I am feeling. In this world, a believer's feeling is suspended between fear and hope. Inshā Allāh, I will tell you how I am feeling when I am in Paradise. This is when I will be fully convinced that I have acquired Allāh's pleasure." These personalities were true gnostics.

Note: It is a beautiful reply which we ought to remember. (compiler)

At a time when Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was facing opposition from all sides, Hadrat Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* said to him: "Hadrat, a certain person was reading this couplet in reference to you:

> Although time has become my enemy, O heart, what we have to see is whether the emotion of the beloved is not in turmoil.

When Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* heard it, he went into a type of ecstasy because the couplet fully expressed what his heart was feeling at the time and it was in line with his condition.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* directed us towards an excellent theme. It is beneficial to everyone. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

RAMAḎĀN ASSEMBLY (4)

Listen to this Ḥadīth:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوم الصائم عبادة، وصمته تسبيح، وعمله مضاعف، ودعاءه مستجاب، وذنبه مغفور.[2]

Now listen to the translation and explanation of this Ḥadīth:

The sleep of a fasting is an act of worship, his silence takes the place of Allāh's glorification, the rewards for his actions are multiplied, his supplications are answered, and his sins are pardoned.

No poem can compare with Ḥadīth

Glory to Allāh! Look at the beauty of this Ḥadīth. Do you think any poem can compete with it? The composition of the greatest of poets cannot compete with the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. No poetry can make us independent of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. It is totally wrong to become so occupied with poetry that you give it more time than the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. It will be a serious indignity to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. You should rather listen to Aḥādīth and study their

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩٠.

commentaries as done by the ʿulamāʾ so that you will realize how deeply they loved Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* A Hadīth states:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[١]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

A shaykh used to say: "I convey people to Allāh *taʿālā* by giving them plenty of food and drink." I say: Where will that poor fellow ever convey you. However, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly conveyed people to Allāh *taʿālā* not only by feeding them but by making them sleep as well. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[٢]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the gnosticism which the statements of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* contained. If a person understands a single Hadīth with his heart, he will become a gnostic.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[٣]

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[1] كشف الخفاء: ج ٢، ص ٢٩٦.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[3] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* explained the meaning of "intention" in much detail. The author of *Fayd al-Qadīr* also explained it beautifully. Although the latter is concise in his explanations, he covers all angles of a discussion. And because he is a Sufi, he gives excellent explanations of Ahādīth.

At the beginning of his book, the author of *Fath al-Bārī* goes into a discussion on the following Hadīth:

إنما الأعمال بالنيات.

Actions are judged by intentions.

He says that the statements of the imāms on the greatness of this Hadīth have reached the level of *tawātur* (such a large number of scholars explained it that it is inconceivable for them to have concurred on fabricating a lie).

Abū ʿAbdillāh *rahimahullāh* said: "There is no Hadīth which is more comprehensive, rich and beneficial than this one." Some scholars including Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* and Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* say that it comprises one third of Islam. Ibn Mahdī *rahimahullāh* said that this Hadīth is worthy of making it the foundation of all other chapters. Imām Bayhaqī *rahimahullāh* said that it is one third of knowledge. This is because man's actions are either with his heart, tongue or other body parts. An intention is made with the heart which is one of these three and the most superior. An intention is preferred because it is an act of worship on its own. Also because other actions are dependent on it. This is why a Hadīth states:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

If you focus on the intention, you will conclude that it is the better of the two.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* said that it is one third of Islam. This means that it is one of these three principles upon which all injunctions are based. One is the Hadīth:

إنما الأعمال بالنيات.

Actions are judged by intentions.

The second is the Hadīth:

من عمل عملا ليس عليه أمرنا فهو رد.[2]

The one who does an action which is not part of our Dīn is rejected.

The third Hadīth is:

الحلال بين والحرام بين...الخ.

The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear…

The explanation given by the author of *Fath al-Bārī* is in its place. Now listen to what the author of *Fayd al-Qadīr* has to say.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* also spoke about the Hadīth,

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ١٨٢.

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

In his lectures. He explained it beautifully and fulfilled its right. From this we can gauge to what extent the ʿulamā’ recognized Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and how well they understood his speech.

A man was repeating the following couplet while he was in solitude:

> I sacrificed my heart for Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I fulfilled the duties which I owed to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I was present on one occasion when he was repeating this couplet, and it appealed to me. I thought to myself, yes brother, it is certainly our duty to sacrifice our heart for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and you have fulfilled it.

I thought of this incident while saying to you that the ʿulamā’ recognized Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, appreciated his words and fulfilled his rights.

Now listen to what the author of *Fayd al-Qadīr* has to say.

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[2]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

Why is this? You people know this much that a believer will live in Paradise forever. His living in it forever is not because of his actions but because of his intention. If it had been on the basis of his actions, his stay in Paradise would have been to the extent of his actions. The recompense which he received is due to his intention because his intention is to obey Allāh *taʿālā* forever. When death comes upon him suddenly, he receives this recompense by virtue of his intention.

The same can be said of an unbeliever. He will remain in the Hell-fire forever. Had he been eligible for it because of his actions, he would have been punished in it to the extent of his actions. He had made the intention that if he is able to live forever, he will still remain stubborn on his unbelief. Thus, he will be punished with an eternal stay in the Hell-fire because of this intention, and not because of his actions.

The intention of a believer is eternal, this is why he will receive eternity. ʿAllāmah Kirmānī *rahimahullāh* said that the action which is better than an intention refers to an action which is made without an intention, or that the part which is the intention is superior to that part of which the action is made up of. This is why ostentation cannot enter an intention. A Hadīth states that if a person goes to bed at night with the intention of waking up for tahajjud but does not wake up, he will receive the reward for tahajjud and the sleep is a charity in his favour.

Some scholars say that the meaning of "an intention being superior to an action" is that whenever a believer does a good deed, there is no end to the good in his intention.

When an unbeliever commits an evil, he makes the intention of committing a worse evil in the future. Here too, there is no end to the evil in his intention.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the various ways in which the scholars of the past used to explain things. Nowadays the scholars do not explain to the masses. If they do, the most they will do is write a book. Only the one who has the knowledge will read the book. Others do not benefit from it, and remain deprived in this way.

Another meaning of an intention of a believer being superior to his action is that while a believer is busy carrying out a certain good action, he has the intention that when he completes it, he will do another good action.

It could also mean that an action alone cannot convey a person to the level to which an intention alone can convey him. Also, an intention can corrupt a good deed, and turn a corrupt deed so righteous whereupon the person is given a reward for it. He is then given multiple rewards for this intention. In the same way, it is a corrupt intention which can cause a multiplication in punishment. An intention is thus more far-reaching and more beneficial. There is a saying:

إذا فسدت النية وقعت البلية.

When the intention is corrupt, the calamity occurs right before the person.

People are on different levels as regards intention. The intention and determination of some people are superior to this world and whatever is in it. There are others whose intention is in the pits, and they have no determination at all. It is an intention alone which

can convey a person to a level which his action could not have conveyed him. For example, a person acquires and teaches knowledge so that Allāh's mercy may descend on him, the angels may pray in his favour, and the animals on land and the fish at sea may seek pardon for him. Another person seeks knowledge merely to fill his belly and to get a good job. What a major difference in intention between the two. The first is doing it solely for Allāh's pleasure. He will obviously be blessed.

The author states further:

عمل المنافق خير من نيته.

The action of a hypocrite is superior to his intention.

In other words, he has an ungodly intention but his action is outwardly good. This is why his action is superior to his intention.

The author then says:

وكل يعمل على نيته. فإذا عمل المؤمن عملا صالحا، ثار في قلبه نور.

Each one acts according to his intention. When a believer does a good deed, a special light is lit in his heart which then comes out and engulfs his body parts.

Did you see the many meanings which the scholars give for this Hadīth:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

Listen further.

An intention is superior to all the good things which are acquired through good actions. Another meaning is that an intention is an act of the heart. And we know that the heart is nobler, and it is the ruler. The action of the one who is nobler is also more noble. This is why an intention is superior to an action. We could say that the purpose of obedience is to enlighten the heart. A heart is enlightened more by an intention because an intention is an attribute of the heart. In other words, it is realized in the heart alone.

Listen further.

Ibn Kamāl says: This Hadīth means that the action of the heart is superior to the actions of the other body parts. ʿAllāmah Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* clarifies this point. He writes in his tafsīr:

والله يضاعف لمن يشاء بفضله وعلى حسب حال المنفق من إخلاصه وتعبه بربه ومن أجله تفاوتت الأعمال في مقادير الثواب.[١]

Allāh taʿālā will multiply for whomever He wills through His grace, and according to the sincerity and reliance of the spender on his Sustainer. It is because of differences in sincerity that there are differences in the amounts of reward.

The gist of the above is that an intention as a genus is superior to an action as a genus. This is why if the two are separated, a person will be rewarded for his intention but not for his action alone. Because this cannot be applied to an unbeliever – because his

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[1] بيضاوي، ص ١٦٩.

intention cannot be taken into consideration – the H̲adīth says:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

Some scholars say that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said this because an intention refers to the servitude of the heart while action refers to the servitude of the other body parts. The action of the heart is more far-reaching and more beneficial than the action of the other body parts. The heart is the ruler while the other body parts are the subjects. The actions of a ruler are greater and more extensive than the actions of the subjects. An action is limited while an intention is not. The intention in the īmān of a believer is on the basis that he will obey Allāh *taʿālā* for as long as he lives. In fact, even if Allāh *taʿālā* were to bring him back to life and he dies again, he will continue obeying Him in each of his lives. Because this belief is firmly entrenched and eternal, the recompense for his intention will also be in a manner which his actions cannot be. This refers to abiding in Paradise forever.

The scholars say that when the intention is genuine and pure; ostentation, pride and vanity are removed from his actions. The person then reaches the rank of those who are perfect in their faith. As for the one who is not perfect, his heart is like any field in which so many trees sprout forth that there is no place to walk. This refers to the excessiveness of hypocrisy. It becomes a heart where the carnal self is fully

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

occupied by various types of whisperings and desires. How, then, can light enter such a heart? An enlightened heart is one which is like a wide barren field. It is a heart which Allāh *taʿālā* opened for Islam, and regarding which He says:

فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ

He is on a special light from his Sustainer.

He becomes fresh and energetic with Allāh's remembrance and His mercy.

Did you see what a beautiful explanation this is on the subject of intention? This is what I was referring to when I said that the author of *Fath al-Bārī* gave a good explanation on intention. He explained the Hadīth beautifully. The speech of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* must be explained in a manner which makes one realize that it is indeed the speech of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These scholars had recognized Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* fully, believed in his prophet-hood with all their heart and had strong īmān in him. This is why when the speech of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was presented to them, their hearts opened up and they explained it fully.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* wrote *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*. In it he writes that the author of *Fath al-Bārī* explained some couplets of Shaykh Ibn Fārid *rahimahullāh* and presented them to Shaykh Madyan *rahimahullāh* so that the latter may write a review. The shaykh wrote the following couplet.

سَارَتْ مُشْرِقَةً وَسِرْتُ مَغْرِبًا – شَتَّانَ بَيْنَ مُشْرِقٍ وَمُغْرِبِ

A lover said with reference to his beloved: She went towards the East while I went towards the West. What a vast distance between the two.

After writing this he returned it to H̲āfiz̲ Ibn H̲ajar *rah̲imahullāh* (the author of *Fath̲ al-Bārī*). The latter concluded thus: The shaykh directed my attention towards the internal self regarding which I am neglectful. He realized this and began accepting the Sufis. In fact, he began remaining in the company of Shaykh Madyan and remained in his service until the very end. Glory to Allāh! He was filled with īmān and a desire for Allāh *taʿālā*. Consequently, he did not remain deprived of spiritual treasures. Instead, he realized his objective.

Now let me say something about

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

The word intention is attributed to "a believer". We learn from this that the good which is found in an intention, is because of īmān. This would mean:

نية المؤمن خير من إيمانه.

The intention of a believer is superior to his īmān.

It becomes clear from this that:

إيمان المؤمن خير من عمله.

The īmān of a believer is superior to his actions.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

The superiority of the intention of a believer is because it stems from īmān, and we know that the rank and value of īmān is superior to actions. The level of an action is dependent on the level of īmān. The stronger the īmān the better the action because īmān is essentially the stimulus for action. Īmān is the source while actions are its branches. There is obviously no comparison between the two. The superiority of the source is obvious. Its superiority is thus proven.

Intention does not separate itself from a believer. Instead, his īmān maintains it and stimulates it in the heart. The Hadīth under discussion is essentially speaking about the superiority of īmān. People generally do not explain it like this whereas we learn from this attribution that the intention of a believer will always be better. His internal self will always be better than his external self. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prayed for this:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ سَرِيْرَتِيْ خَيْرًا مِّنْ عَلَانِيَتِيْ، وَاجْعَلْ عَلَانِيَتِيْ صَالِحَةً

O Allāh! Make my inner self better than my outer self, and make my outer self good as well.

The external self of a hypocrite is better than his inner self, while the internal self of a believer is superior to his external self. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

I also quoted the following Hadīth at the beginning of my lecture:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[1]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

Now listen to what I have to say about it.

The sleep of an ʿālim is superior to the salāh of an ignorant person because leaving out the salāh is better for him than performing it. Due to his ignorance, he considers the wrong to be right and the prohibited to be obligatory. In the same way, he believes evil to be good. His ignorance prevents him from differentiating between the two. It is due to ignorance that we see people of today not doing what Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* instructed and emphasised, while being very enthusiastic about doing other things [which have not been ordered].

Do you know how this deplorable condition came about and why we are not successful today? Understand well that it is because of the same ignorance [mentioned above]. It is not that people do not want to do anything or are not bothered about doing it. They want to do the work but they are ignorant. This is why there is no blessing and benefit in the work. A person is obedient but he is also carrying out works of disobedience. And his ignorance causes him to assume that he is rewarded for it. Allāh forbid! Just imagine committing a sin

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[1] كشف الخفاء: ج ٢، ص ٢٩٦.

and having hopes of reward from Allāh *taʿālā*. What a repugnant act of ignorance!

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from ignorance. Āmīn. (compiler)

There is a link between external and internal actions

You should understand that there is a link and a connection between external and internal actions. The internal self sets right external actions – e.g. sincerity – and also corrupts them, e.g. ostentation, egotism, etc. If a person does not understand internal matters, the effects which they have on external acts of worship, and the ways of saving himself from their influence; he will not be able to remain secure from the evil effects of internal evils. The disadvantage in this is that in addition to his external actions being carried out without sincerity, there will soon come a time when external actions will be given up totally. The man will then experience nothing but wretchedness, misfortune, weariness and hardship. This is a serious loss. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

من أتعب نفسه في العبادة على خبط فليس له إلا العناء.[1]

The person who tires his self in blind worship (without insight and cognition) will acquire nothing but fatigue.

The reason for work getting spoilt

Listen! This is how the work got spoilt today and is continuing to get spoilt. You people think that there is no saintliness in the Sharīʿat and a person cannot

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير: ٢٩١.

become a saint through it. You think in this way because you see people performing salāh, observing the fast, performing tarāwīh salāh, reading the Qur'ān but not benefiting in any way. You therefore conclude that – Allāh forbid – there is nothing in the Sharīʿat. And if there was, these people [who adhere to it] would have been successful. This assumption of yours is absolutely wrong.

The fact of the matter is that people are becoming confirmations of the following Hadīth because of their ignorance.

من أتعب نفسه في العبادة على خبط فليس له إلا العناء.[1]

The person who tires his self in blind worship (without insight and cognition) will acquire nothing but fatigue.

If a person applies himself to worship but has no knowledge whatsoever of spiritual matters and their effects which are influential in the goodness or badness of actions, then all his actions will obviously go to waste. He will acquire nothing but fatigue and hardship. He will be totally in line with the following verse of the Qur'ān:

عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ. تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً. تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ.

Toiling, worn out. Falling into a blazing fire. Given to drink from a boiling spring.[2]

We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير: ٢٩١.

[2] Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah, 88: 3-5.

A statement of Hadrat ʻAlī

Hadrat ʻAlī *radiyallāhu ʻanhu* said: "Two persons broke my back. One is the ignorant worshipper and the other is the scholar who is lazy and lackadaisical in matters of Dīn." People are deceived by an ignorant worshipper and a non-practising scholar. When people assemble around these two, the worshipper – through his ignorance – and the scholar - due to his malpractices – they will leave the people confounded. They will lead the people astray just as they are astray.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوروا منازلكم بالصلاة وقراءة القرآن.

Illuminate your homes with salāh and the recitation of the Qur'ān.

This is because the house of a believer is a place of worship. The house will be illuminated because the heart of a believer is like a mirror. The glitter and splendour of salāh and Qur'ān recitation will increase that light. The divine illumination of Allāh *taʻālā* will emanate from within and the reality of the demands of Dīn will become clear to him. Consequently, he will acquire tranquillity and conviction. Tranquillity is, after all, the objective of a believer:

اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ.

Listen! It is in Allāh's remembrance that the hearts find tranquillity.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʻd, 13: 28.

Listen! I have something else to say. The scholars explained the following statement in various ways.

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

Let me say something to you. There is no need to go far. Why do you not come towards the Qur'ān? Look at what Allāh *taʿālā* is saying:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ. يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ. إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid. Which issues from between the loins and the chest. Surely He has the power to bring him back.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلٰى طَعَامِهِ. أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا. ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا. فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا. وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا. وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا. وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا. وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا. مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ.

Let man then reflect on his food: We poured the water, falling from above. We then cleaved the earth asunder. Thereupon We caused grain to grow therein. And grapes and edible plants. And olives and dates. And

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[1] Sūrah aṯ-Ṯāriq, 86: 5-8.

gardens of dense foliage. And fruits and pastures. Of use to you and to your cattle.[1]

In the first quotation Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about man's origin. Man ought to examine his origin and creation. From this he will be able to recognize Allāh. In yet another place, Allāh *taʿālā* speaks in an angry tone:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ.

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation. He says: "Who will give life to the bones when they have crumbled to dust?"[2]

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ.

Say: "He will give life to them who had created them the first time. And He knows every creation."[3]

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ.

He who made for you fire out of a green tree, you then kindle [your fires] therewith.[4]

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ.

Is, then, He who created the heavens and the earth not able to create someone like them? Why not! He alone is the actual creator, the all-knowing.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 24-32.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 78.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 79.

[4] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 80.

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ.

His command is merely this, that when He wills to do something He says to it: 'Be!' and it immediately becomes.[2]

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُون.

Pure is that being in whose hands is the dominion of everything, and it is to Him that you will be returned.[3]

Allāh *taʿālā* reprimands man for forgetting his creation.

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation.

Man thinks that his power is like Ours, and in the process he forgot how he was created. Since man has been reprimanded for his forgetfulness, the opposite of it becomes obligatory on him. And the opposite of it is to learn and realize how he was created. This means that in order to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* and have conviction in His power, it is necessary for man to think about his own creation. This is the meaning of:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 81.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 82.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 83.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

Self-recognition is obligatory because it is commanded in the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلٰى طَعَامِهِ.

Let man then reflect on his food.

When man studies his own creation, he will recognize his self, he will realize his insignificance and through this, he will recognize the greatness of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what Allāh *taʿālā* refers to when he says:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Does man not know that We created him from a drop of sperm. This demanded of him to think about his origin. Then based on his insignificance and the greatness of the Creator, he ought to have been ashamed of his audaciousness and impudence. Secondly, he should have realized the proof of Resurrection from his creation. However, he did not do this. Instead, he began disputing openly with Allāh *taʿālā*.

I ask you: Is this not enough to make man realize his own self? Allāh *taʿālā* completely exposed the reality

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

of man and made him lower his head in servitude. Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* provided beautiful points for the removal of pride. People read them and say that pride is still not leaving them. I say, can there be a better treatment for pride than what is given in the Qur'ān? Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says elsewhere:

اَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُّمْ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ مَّهِيْنٍ.

Did We not create you from a worthless fluid?[2]

فإذا هو خصيم، أي مبالغ في الخصومة والجدال الباطل.

We created him from a drop of sperm and now he is disputing with Us openly, and that too on false premises. We created him from the lowest and most insignificant of things, and he is suddenly arguing with Us on a matter whose correctness is attested to by his very own origin.

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

[2] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 28.

A cure for pride

I ask you, can a person still have pride after reading these verses? What are you doing? Where are you going? Understand the Qur'ān. Very few people read it with understanding, whereas it contains everything.

جميع العلم في القرآن لكن – تقاصر عنه أفهام الرجال

All the sciences are in the Qur'ān, but the comprehension of man falls short from understanding it.

Since Allāh *taʿālā* sent down the Qur'ān, it means that He provided the means to send it to you. It is as though He took the responsibility of ensuring that it [the Qur'ān] will convey you to Allāh *taʿālā*. If you still do not understand it and think that you will reach Him through other things, then woe and destruction to you. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ. وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ. وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبُ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ. وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ. لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ. فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ.

Do they not see that We created for them of that which Our hands created, cattle, they are now their owners? We subdued them [the cattle] for them. Now some of them they use for riding and some they eat. For them, in the cattle, are benefits and fountains of drink. Why, then, do they not give thanks? They take gods apart from Allāh, hoping that they may be helped. They will

not be able to help them. [Rather] they will be brought forward as armies against them. You should therefore not be grieved by their statements. We know whatever they conceal and whatever they bring into the open.[1]

The sweetness of a royal speech

Look at how regal and sweet this speech is! Look at how evil destroys man. I told you that whatever Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* wrote as regards the treatment for pride is in its place. I say to you, man should just think about his creation for the removal of pride. This is the Qur'ānic prescription for it. Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

اَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِءٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ يُّدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيْمٍ كَلَّا اِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

Does every one of them hope to enter a garden of bliss? Never! We have created them of what they also know.[2]

Does man think he can enter Paradise without īmān? This is his vain hope. One of the explanations for the words "what they also know" is that it refers to the impure drop of sperm from which man is created. The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* in this regard:

وفي التعبير عن مادة خلقهم بما يعلمون مما يكسر سورة المتكبرين ما لا يخفى.[١]

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 71-76.

[2] Sūrah al-Maʿārij, 70: 38-39.

By referring to the drop of sperm from which man is created as "what they also know", Allāh taʿālā breaks the swiftness of the pride of the proud and haughty ones. This is not concealed from the scholars.

We learn from this that pride has a swiftness which has to be broken. It is broken when man thinks about his origin and how he was created. When he sees that he has been created from such a despicable impure drop; it will create servitude in him, he will realize his insignificance, and his pride will be smashed.

Now listen carefully. Do not say that Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* has prescribed various treatments for pride. The fact of the matter is that I am saying the same thing which he said. You can understand this much for yourself: Allāh *taʿālā* sent down His speech, showed man the ailments of his carnal self, and then prescribed treatments for them. Now what else is there to be said? What is the need for us to go so far? Did you know that the Sufis are in the habit of reading Sūrah Yā Sīn after the fajr salāh so that it may serve as a meditation over man's reality and his insignificance? Man must be mindful of this so that he can realize the greatness and grandeur of Allāh *taʿālā*. The saints have the habit of meditation after fajr salāh. The first meditation which they engage in is this what I just said.

Allāh *taʿālā* also speaks about matters related to man's self. The Sufis refer to it as *sayr anfusī* (a journey of the self). For example, Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٩، ص ٧٥.

وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ.

And within your own selves [as well]. Will you not then see?[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* also speaks about *sayr āfāqī* (a journey into the world).

وَفِيْهَا آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

In it are signs for the believers.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَاَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ.

O believers! Some of your spouses and children are your enemies. So be constantly aware of them.[2]

After reading the Qur'ān, what other book are you searching for?

فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

Which speech are they going to believe in after this?

Look! Allāh *taʿālā* taught His recognition in just two things.

(1)

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلٰى طَعَامِهِ.

Let man then reflect on his food.

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[1] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 21.

[2] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

This refers to Allāh-recognition through what He placed in this world. (maʿrifat-e-āfāqī).

(2)

In the other verse, He said:

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ...

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]?[1]

This is known as *sayr anfusī* (a journey of the self). This is what is referred to by the words:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

It is a near and internal journey through things which are within man. As for the *sayr āfāqī* (a journey into the world), it is to do with things which are around him. Thus, why do you not acquire Allāh's recognition through things which are near to you?

Note: All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained comprehensive themes which display his deep knowledge, cognition, wisdom and intelligence. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to read them, understand them and put them into practice. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to value and appreciate the academic and practical wisdoms of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and pray for his high stages. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

Appreciate this period of fasting

I say to you people: You must appreciate these fasts. You probably never heard this Hadīth:

نوم الصائم عبادة، وصمته تسبيح.[1]

The sleep of a fasting is an act of worship, his silence takes the place of Allāh's glorification.

The Ahādīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also fall under the category of divine revelation from Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى. اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى.

He does not speak by the desire of his self. It is solely an order that is sent down.[2]

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* values the actions of His servants. He turned the sleep of a fasting person into an act of worship and classified his silence as a glorification.

Now how does the sleep of a fasting person become an act of worship? In the Sharīʿat, fasting refers to abstaining from food, drink and conjugal relations from true dawn to sunset with the intention of fasting. When a person makes the intention of fasting and intends to keep away from these things, he has started his fast. The entire period from dawn to dusk is counted as an act of worship. There is no break or pause during this period. And we know that sleep is not an invalidator of fasting. Thus, no matter what a

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩٠.

[2] Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 3-4.

person does during the period of fasting – as long as it is not an invalidator of fasting – he will be carrying out an act of worship [i.e. fasting]. It will be classified as such whether he is awake, asleep, in the toilet, etc. This is a unique feature of fasting that it remains in the presence of these activities. On the other hand, other acts of worship cease to exist with the onset of sleep. This is the meaning of "The sleep of a fasting person is an act of worship".

The following Hadīth is another proof of Allāh's appreciation:

لخلوف فم الصائم أطيب عند الله من ريح المسك.[1]

The smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is superior to the fragrance of musk in the sight of Allāh taʿālā.

I ask you, is this not appreciation? Does it not demonstrate the virtue of fasting?

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* observed fast for thirty days and was then proceeding toward Mt. Tūr to converse with Allāh *taʿālā*. On the way, he thought to himself that he ought to brush his teeth and clean his mouth before he can have the honour of conversing with Allāh *taʿālā*. He used a miswāk to do this. Because Allāh *taʿālā* loves the smell which emanates from a fasting person and he now removed it, Allāh *taʿālā* ordered Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to observe fast for ten more days.

Did you see Allāh's appreciation? It will be most unfortunate if we still do not value this worship and

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[1] مشكوة: ص ١٧٣.

pay attention to it. I therefore advise you to continually value and appreciate your fasting.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are very useful and beneficial themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to appreciate them. Āmīn. (compiler)

RAMAḎĀN ASSEMBLY (5)

I have been speaking on a certain theme for several days. It is a series which has been continuing. Each day, I say something about it. Because the theme is extensive, the text is always unable to explain it in full. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself explains it in detail. I read the Qur'ān to you. In it is an explanation of Allāh's recognition. I say, Allāh personally taught us how to recognize Him. It is to this end that He revealed the Qur'ān. The recognition is not confined to the Creator; it includes the creation as well. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about our own selves. By revealing the Qur'ān, it is as though Allāh *taʿālā* took the responsibility of making us His recognizers through it.

Now you think for yourself. If Allāh *taʿālā* commissioned Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and sent His Books with them, does it make sense that He will give the responsibility of teaching His recognition to someone else? Do you think He will leave it to the intellect of man? That man must recognize Allāh *taʿālā* solely through his intellect? If the intellects of the philosophers and logicians were enough, why would Allāh *taʿālā* set up a system of commissioning Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*?

What we have to realize is that the intellect is a creation; the most it can recognize is related to creations like it. It is insufficient to recognize the Creator. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* took it upon Himself to teach us how to recognize Him. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the Resurrection:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيْمٌ. يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكٰرٰى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكٰرٰى وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللهِ شَدِيْدٌ.

O people! Fear your Sustainer, for surely, the earthquake of the [last] hour is a mighty thing. The day when you behold it, every suckling mother will forget her suckling, every pregnant woman will deliver her burden, and you will see the people intoxicated yet they are not intoxicated, but the punishment of Allāh is severe.[1]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* pointed towards Dr. Sayyid Mahmūd Sāhib Ghāzīpūrī (who was sitting in the assembly) and said: You wrote to me stating that the ʿulamāʾ focused less on the Qurʾān. The point which you made appealed to me. When anyone makes statements of this nature, I conclude that there is life in his heart due to which he is experiencing this disappointment. The fact of the matter is that people have certainly wrapped the Qurʾān and kept it one side. This is why they are not achieving anything.

Allāh *taʿālā* describes the day of Resurrection and its severity by saying that it will leave people stupefied. Allāh *taʿālā* gives the reason for it by saying:

وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللهِ شَدِيْدٌ

...but the punishment of Allāh is severe.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 1-3.

While presenting various scenes of the day of Resurrection to the believers, Allāh *taʿālā* addresses the unbelievers as well.

Where the Qur’ān uses the words:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

O believers!

The addressees are believers. And where the Qur’ān uses the words:

يَا اَيُّهَا النَّاسُ

O people!

The addressees are the unbelievers. Sometimes, the Qur’ān addresses the Jews and Christians separately. Since the knowledge of Allāh *taʿālā* is all-encompassing, He addresses the believers, the auliyā’, the Prophets; and sometimes He makes a general address. The verse under discussion is a general address.

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ

O people! Fear your Sustainer

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِي اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّرِيْدٍ. كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيْهِ إِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ.

Of people is he who disputes about Allāh without any knowledge and follows every rebellious Satan about whom it is decreed that whoever befriends him, him

will he lead astray and drive to the punishment of the fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* disapproves of anyone discussing the Being of Allāh *taʿālā* and to argue about it without knowledge. If anyone wants to debate and argue, he should at least have some knowledge. If a person wants to discuss the Being and attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*, he should have knowledge for that as well. How can he simply dive into a discussion without knowledge? How can he follow every rebellious Shayṯān regarding whom it is decreed that whoever befriends him will be led astray by him and driven towards the Hell-fire.

In the case where a person does not have knowledge, yet he has the audacity to delve in issues of this nature, then it means he has been deceived by Shayṯān and he is certainly following him. Shayṯān does this to increase his numbers.

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have been coming and explaining everything in a beautiful manner. They have been showing us some of their miracles but you are not accepting them. On the other hand, you are prepared to believe astrologers. You must have heard about the uproar which was created by some astrologers when they claimed that the Resurrection is upon us. Someone came and asked me about it. I said, nothing will happen. These are just stories which they fabricated. Many astrologers like them came into this world and have long gone, yet nothing happened.

When I say something to you, you doubt it. When I quote from the Qur'ān and H̲adīth, you do not believe

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[1] Sūrah al-H̲ajj, 22: 3-4.

it. Yet you are ready to believe these fabricated stories. The fact of the matter is that if you do not accept the words of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, you are bound to follow liars and impostors. You will then have to follow the biggest and most notorious liar and impostor – Shayt̲ān. This world is based on following someone or the other. If you are not going to follow those who are on the truth, you will end up following those who are on falsehood. You will end us disgraced, plus you would have deprived yourself of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in the next verse:

يٰۤأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ؕ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ إِلٰى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا أَشُدَّكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ إِلٰى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا.

O people! If you are in doubt as to the Resurrection, then it is We who created you from soil, then from a drop [of sperm], then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh – partly formed and partly unformed – so that We may clearly expound to you. We cause to remain in the wombs whatever We will till an appointed time. We then bring you forth as an infant [that you may grow] and reach your age of full strength. From among you is he who is caused to die [young] and from among you is he who reaches a state

of abject old age – unable to understand anything after being able to understand.[1]

The sequential creation of man

These verses describe the sequential creation of man. It describes the different changes which take place and how he moves from one condition to the next even though there is an exceptional dichotomy between one condition and the other. The person who looks at this extraordinary power of Allāh *taʿālā* will be convinced that – based on logic – it will be easier for Him to bring man back to life. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* says:

…so that We may clearly expound to you.

We did all this so that the matter of life after death may become clear to you.

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* explains to man his own origin and reality, and also teaches him about Allāh *taʿālā*. If you are going to cast aside the Book of Allāh, you will not find the path. I ask you, why do you not read this verse? Why do you not enjoy reading it? After all, Allāh *taʿālā* describes everything in it. He created you from soil, then from a drop [of sperm], then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh. He then caused you to remain in the womb, then caused you to emerge as an infant, to grow to your full strength, and then to reach abject old age.

Allāh *taʿālā* did all this so that you may realize that the qualities which you possess are temporary and

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 5.

honorary. Previously you were a distinguished scholar, and now you have been reduced to an ignoramus.

Each of the different stages of man's development have been mentioned separately to show that each one is a proof in itself of Allāh's power and His being the Creator. His power is gauged from the fact that He created man from soil. After that, each human is a proof of Allāh's absolute power and all-encompassing knowledge. This proof is therefore presented to the one who rejects. Furthermore, all the realities and intricate points which could not be brought into the text are explained in this way. The very creation of man is a proof of life after death because it shows that the One who can create in the first instance is more likely to be able to create a second time. Unbelievers also believe in the return of souls, but they do not believe in the recreation of the physical body.

I ask, why is this? Has the body not committed any mistake? It certainly has. Man commits sins with his hands, legs, eyes and other body parts. The soul is confined within it, so reward and punishment will be experienced by both [the body and the soul]. I add, even in salāh, the body alone does not submit itself before Allāh *taʿālā*. When you perform salāh, do you not bend and lower your body? Do you perform salāh with your soul only? Why, then, are you considering those who lower their bodies to be beneath you? You do not do it yourself so you do not respect those who do it.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

Do those who have earned evils think that We will make them equal to those who believed and did good deeds, so that their living and their dying will be the same? It is an evil claim which they make.[1]

How can it happen that believers are downtrodden in this world and are treated in the same way in the Hereafter? The unbelievers used to claim: "If the Resurrection takes place, we will be in a superior position over there as well." The present verse refutes their claim.

You may not see the virtue of righteous people in this world because all types of people inhabit it. The day of Resurrection has been set aside to differentiate the sinners from the non-sinners.

وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ اَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ.

You stand aside today, O sinners![2]

The separation will take place in the Hereafter; this world is not the place for it. This world is inhabited by believers, unbelievers, hypocrites, etc. and each one believes that he is on the true path. This cannot be decided in this world. The day of Recompense is set aside for it.

اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا.

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 21.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 59.

Surely the day of decision is at a fixed time.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* provides proofs time and again but heedless people do not realize them. The reason is that you people have made the Qur'ān a worldly thing. Many people benefited from it but not those who turned it into a worldly item. Listen to what this exegete is saying. He is saying that the sequential creation of man is described in this verse so that the person who ponders over it will be compelled into believing that the Being who first created man from soil when there was no sign of life in him and was able to put him through the different stages of development is certainly able to bring him back to life.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* presented excellent points on Qur'ānic exegesis. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to appreciate them Āmīn. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 17.

RAMADĀN ASSEMBLY (6)

Yesterday I related to you the story of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He experienced excruciating pain on the night of the 5th of Muharram. He performed the ʿishā salāh with congregation and then loss consciousness. He remained like that for one hour. When he came back to his senses, he asked: "Did I perform my ʿishā salāh?" The people replied in the affirmative. He said: "I'll perform it one more time because I do not know what happened." He performed it again and lost consciousness. This time it lasted longer. When he woke up he asked: "Did I perform my ʿishā salāh?" His attendants said: "You have already performed it twice." He said: "I'll perform it one more time because I do not know what happened." He performed it a third time, said: "*Yā Hayyu Yā Qayyūm*" and passed away. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* repeated his salāh because his affiliation with salāh was strong. The condition which is strong in a person remains with him until his end. Performing his salāh repeatedly was not because of knowledge but out of love. Knowledge demands that if you have performed it once, it is fulfilled. He did not get consolation, so he performed it repeatedly. This is what love demands.

The following is related about Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddus *rahimahullāh*:

> Despite the inundation of emotions and overpowering of spiritual conditions, he was resolute in following the lofty Sunnat.

> He was firm in adhering to the obligations of Dīn.

It is also said about him that even in his final illness he did not allow any difference to creep into the nature of his worship. He performed a fresh wuḏū' seventy times in one night and followed each one with taẖīyyatul wuḏū'. On the final occasion, he made gestures indicating that he needed to perform wuḏū'. He performed it, commenced with two rak'ats of ṯalāh, and performed the bowing and prostrating postures through gestures. He passed away in that condition. What a blessed journey to the Hereafter!

Look! His time of departure from this world was almost up. He did not have the strength to perform the bowing and prostrating postures, but he still performed wuḏū' and ṯalāh in that condition. The reason for it is that he had established such a powerful bond with the bowing and prostrating postures that he was compelled to perform them involuntarily and spontaneously. This is why he performed wuḏū' and ṯalāh repeatedly.

We are not on the ways of the Ahlullāh and we do not even claim to be on their path. But we say to those who make such claims: "You are not on the path of the Ahlullāh. Their conditions were something and yours are something else. It is conditions which are taken into consideration and the fruits thereof are based on them."

The author of *Zubdah al-Maqāmāt* constantly writes about the humbleness, submission and fear of H̲aḏrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus *raẖimahullāh.* Together with that he writes that although he was overwhelmed by his spiritual conditions, he was intensely fastidious about fulfilling the injunctions of the Sharī'at. On one occasion, the imām of the

masjid did not arrive on time to lead the salāh. His nephew, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī stepped forward and led the congregation. While reading:

اَلَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ

He paused slightly between these two words. The Shaykh repeated his salāh and said angrily: "Youngsters should be prohibited from leading the congregation. They must not be allowed to corrupt the salāh of the congregation. Does he not know this much that when a relative clause and pronoun join, they are treated as a single word? It is therefore not permissible to separate the two, nor to pause between them."

Incidents of this nature are recorded in the biographies of the saints but people do not relate them. It is with reference to this that someone rightly said:

> The Muslims may be buried in their graves, but the teachings of Islam are to be found in books.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has recorded the life conditions of the saints. He recorded each one's life separately. Do you think you can reach the ranks of the saints by force? You are neither on their path nor do you possess their knowledge. You neither have their conviction, actions nor conditions. How, then, are you going to reach their level?

I had asked some people to write a synopsis of the topic on which I spoke yesterday. One of them wrote thus:

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's assembly of today was spiritually motivating to me. I was able to compare what Hadrat Wālā said to my own condition. In the process, I was sometimes affected by it and sometimes rued over the fact that I was not on that standard. I cried over the first condition and made duʿā' when I thought about the second. The entire assembly was spent between these two enjoyable states [of crying and making duʿā'].

At the beginning of the assembly, Hadrat Wālā related stories of the saints. From them we learnt how they respected the Sharīʿat and were particularly attached to following the Sunnat. After hearing about the nature of their salāh, my own salāh appears like a sin in comparison to theirs. When I heard about their attention to salāh, my heart was filled with the seriousness of Allāh's worship. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to confer me with His love and love for His worship. Āmīn.

Hadrat Wālā then continued speaking in this vein about the spiritual affinity of the saints while I continued crying. I cannot understand the reason for my crying except for the feeling that Hadrat wants to take me with him to Paradise. Due to his absolute affection and love, Hadrat Wālā wants to show us the easiest way – i.e. the path and the means – and wants us to tread it. But we are so wretched that we are not opening our eyes. This

> reminds me of that incident from the life of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* when he said to his uncle, Abū T̲ālib: “Just whisper the kalimah in my ear and I will intercede on your behalf on the day of Resurrection.”
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> While explaining the importance of the affiliation of the Sufis, H̲ad̲rat Wālā – in his humility – said: “Had I not been blessed with an affinity with H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*, do you think these people would have ever bothered to even ask about me? It is really my affiliation with H̲ad̲rat which is doing the work.”

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* said in this regard:

There are different levels of love and affiliation. The greater a person’s affiliation with a Sufi master, the more he will benefit. He will benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. The nature of the benefit in the Hereafter will only be known when we go there. Because it is dependent on Allāh’s grace, it is not bound to any rule. In other words, we do not know which action will be liked by Allāh *taʿālā* due to which the person receives His grace. That is all.

A Maulānā S̲āh̲ib had passed away. Someone saw him in a dream and asked him how he fared. He said that Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned him. When he was asked how, he said: “My wife had cooked a broth on one occasion. It had so much of salt that I could not eat it. However, I did not utter a single word of complaint – not softly nor harshly. I ate the food. Allāh *taʿālā* was pleased by this action and pardoned me on account of it.”

I heard this story from one of my teachers in Deoband:

H̱aḏrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd ar-Raẖīm S̱āẖib Dehlawī *raẖimahullāh* was the father of H̱aḏrat Shāh Walī Allāh S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh*. One day he saw a dog lying in the mud. It was in a pitiable condition because of the severe cold. There was a public bath nearby. He carried the dog and gave it a bath. After some time, he happened to be going to some place. He went onto a path which was extremely narrow. It was difficult for just one person to tread that path. To make matters worse, there was mud and impurities on both sides. A dog approached from the front and both stopped – facing each other. H̱aḏrat Shāh S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh* said: "O dog, go down so that I could proceed." He was informed through kashf that the dog said: "I am most astonished at the dervishes of today. They give preference to their own comfort over the comfort of others. Whereas the saints of the past used to forgo their own comforts for the comfort of others." He said: "That is not the case. Rather, the reason for this is that I have many duties to Allāh *taʿālā*. If I were to fall in the impurity, how will I be able to perform s̱alāh without washing my clothes? I will have to bear the inconvenience of washing my clothes. On the other hand, you have no obligations. If you become impure, it will not affect you in any way. Once you get dry, you will be back to normal."

The dog said: "You are right. However, understand this much: If you went down and became impure, the impurity can be washed off with a single jug of water. But if I went down and you passed through without getting impure, your heart will develop an impurity which cannot be washed off with even the water of

the seven oceans. I am referring to the impurity of a superiority-complex which will develop in you on account of this. You now have a choice."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was overcome by a spiritual condition. He jumped down and the dog went through. Subsequently he received ilhām[1]: "O ʿAbd ar-Rahīm! Do you know what this was all about? The story is that on one occasion you did an act of kindness to another dog. I willed for you to remain indebted to it. It was through a fellow dog – from its own kind – that I conveyed so much of knowledge to you."

We learn from this that the smallest of good actions should not be disregarded. It may well be that it is accepted in Allāh's court and becomes the means for a person's salvation.

When a person has an affiliation with a saint, it does not go to waste. He benefits from him in this world and there is hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will not deprive him of His grace in the Hereafter.

The above statement serves as a strong stimulus for those who are affiliated with saints to ensure that their affiliation is based on a genuine and sincere bond. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us and may He bless our affiliation with strength and genuineness. And may He make it a means of progress in our affiliation with Him. Āmīn.

You already heard that Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was fastidious in following the Sunnat and practising on the Sharīʿat

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[1] When Allāh *taʿālā* puts a thought in a person's heart it is called an ilhām.

notwithstanding the many spiritual conditions which he experienced. Being overcome by spiritual conditions and following the Sunnat are two opposites. A person is unconscious in the first while the second demands total consciousness. We cannot comprehend how these personalities combined the two. The proof for both is in the verse:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say, if you love Allāh then follow me.

Allāh *taʿālā* is instructing Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to say: "If you love Allāh *taʿālā* then follow me." Allāh *taʿālā* uses the words "if you love Allāh" for His love; and the words "then follow me" for following the Sunnat. He laid down the following of the Sunnat as a sign of love for Him.

I heard my teachers speaking about Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* but did not hear them quoting any statement of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Whereas Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had himself come to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* to become his disciple. By the time he reached, the Shaykh had passed away. He then went back and pledged allegiance to Khwājah Bāqī Billāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* was a distinguished scholar. This can be gauged from some of his conditions and statements. His fastidiousness in following the Sunnat and expertise in the Tarīqat can also be gauged from them.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* relates some of his conditions in *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī Chishtīyyah al-ʿAlīyyah* (The

Clear Sunnah Among The Exalted Chishtīs). He writes:

> Every saint was particular about following the Sunnat – each according to his rank. One could not reach the level of the other, and could not even understand it.

He writes further:

> If a person rejects them even after learning about their fastidiousness in following the Sunnat, then such a person will inevitably be deprived. A rejecter acquires no position apart from disgrace and humiliation.

The author of *ʿAwārif* said:

> The person who rejects is astray and has transgressed the bounds.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful statement.

I came across this in the writings of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*; I did not see it anywhere else. He said: "A rejecter experiences nothing but humiliation, deprivation and repulsion."

He writes further:

> Although the one who affirms has not reached that level, there is hope that his affirmation which he is resorting to in his service and companionship of the saints will convey him to their level and make him a true gnostic.

Look at this exceptional statement of the Shaykh. A person reaches perfection solely through affirmation and becomes a true recognizer of Allāh *taʿālā*. After

all, Dīn entails nothing but affirmation. Allāh *taʿālā* describes the believers:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

Those who affirm the day of Recompense.

Allāh *taʿālā* is listing the actions of the righteous believers and including in the list that they affirm the day of Recompense. The first verse of the Qur'ān which contains a praise of the believers states:

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ

They believe in the unseen.

Their actions are described after this. Allāh *taʿālā* first says that they believe in the unseen. Īmān and affirmation are the same. Those who have the quality of affirmation are *musaddiq* – the affirmers. It is the path shown by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. In it there is no escape from affirmation. It is the greatest thing. Unfortunately, the condition of people is that they consider it to be nothing. If they engaged in repeating Allāh's name 5 000 times, they think they have done a great thing. But they consider affirmation to be nothing. Whereas it is learnt from the Qur'ān that it is indeed a great thing and enjoys a lofty position. Different forms of dhikr are nothing in comparison to it. This is why Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is saying that a person who goes to a saint with affirmation, it is hoped that his affirmation will convey him to perfection and make him into a gnostic.

Hypocrites and unbelievers were rejecters, so they were disgraced and driven out. The believers

possessed affirmation, so they were guided and accepted in Allāh's court.

A disciple of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* received an inspiration which said:

صر مؤمنا أو كافرا

It does not matter whether you become a believer or an unbeliever.

The Shaykh wrote to him:

> "It is known as an abusive love. It is an interference with one's love." He then added: "You must continue with your work and remain resolute on the Sharīʿat. Do not fear anything. Become the soil of Allāh *taʿālā* and you will become a king. Become His slave and you will be able to do as you want."

The Shaykh writes to one of his disciples:

> Remain vigilant and be steadfast in the work at hand. Remain firm on the Sharīʿat. As long as you remain steadfast on the Sharīʿat and continue the work tirelessly, you will experience light upon light, and mystery after mystery will be laid bare before you.

Glory to Allāh! What a powerful incentive! He says further:

A disciple was seeing some type of light so he related it to his shaykh. The shaykh was an enlightened person so he said: "Go and bring a handful of straw without asking its owner for permission to take it." The disciple did as he was told and the light went

out. The disciple came to the shaykh and informed him. The shaykh understood its reality and said: "Remain focussed. The light which you had seen was true light. Had it remained even after this sin which you committed [of taking straw without permission], it would not have been light in reality. It would have been darkness. It would not have been the truth, it would have been falsehood."

In other words, where there is no influence of the Sharīʿat, it is undoubtedly a satanic whispering.

The reason for asking the disciple to take a handful of straw which belonged to someone else was because although this action is permissible in itself, it was not becoming of the disciple to do this bearing in mind his spiritual condition. It was against his high level of piety. The shaykh therefore put him through a test. If his condition is genuine, it will affect him by doing even this small act. Thus, it did have an effect on him and the spiritual light which he was experiencing was extinguished. The shaykh concluded the genuineness of his disciple and was satisfied by it.

Now look! If the doing of a permissible act could have such an effect, what can be said of the deprivation which is experienced when a person commits major sins. You should therefore remain firm on obedience and uphold the Sharīʿat because there is nothing apart from the Sharīʿat to ensure internal spiritual purity. A person may become a genuine walī, the light which he sees may be genuine, his actions and words may be genuine; but he still has to follow and emulate Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* When explaining the Sharīʿat, he does not have the right to say anything from his side.

Know well that it is the time of a test, it is not the time for punishment and reward. The time for punishment and reward is in the Hereafter. What light, effulgence and spiritual ecstasy you may experience now; it is to test you. You should therefore remain fearful and always think of this famous saying:

والمخلصون على خطر عظيم.

The sincere ones are in real danger.

The shaykh says further:

> The true men subdued and overpowered their lives, vanquished the world, and reached the effulgence and mysteries of Allāh *taʿālā*. All praise is due to Allāh.

Listen! The life-conditions of the auliyā' are commentaries and explanations for the life-conditions of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. If the spiritual conditions and stations of a saint are not explained, they will depart with his departure from this world. This is why the saints of every era explain and expound on the conditions of their pious predecessors. Although they have passed on, their excellences and teachings are alive. A poet rightly said:

> When a person's heart has been revived with love, his legacy is recorded forever in the newspaper of the world.

When I explained this, people were left amazed and couldn't believe that there were such people who possessed such knowledge, practice and spiritual conditions. People of this nature will be found in

every era. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from their blessings. Āmīn.

ACTION IS EASY, KNOWLEDGE IS DIFFICULT

I had addressed a person specifically in one of my assemblies and said to him:

There has been a constant battle between knowledge and ignorance. It was on the basis of knowledge and ignorance that battles were fought between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have been the original bearers of knowledge, while the unbelievers have been the flag bearers of ignorance.

If you examine any battle which is referred to as a battle between Islam and unbelief, you will realize that its fundamental reason is the same battle between knowledge and ignorance. This is because Islam is an embodiment of light while unbelief is nothing but darkness. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān refers to the unbelievers as ignorant. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَاْمُرُوْنِّيْ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُوْنَ.

Say: Are you asking me to worship someone other than Allāh, O ignorant ones?[1]

The Prophets' sole objective was to proliferate knowledge. They were given this responsibility by Allāh *taʿālā* so they carried it out. The unbelievers - acting under the dictates of their carnal self – opposed them. Their own ignorance prevented them from giving up their ancestral ignorance, self-worship

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[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 64.

and ignorant customs. This is why they stood in opposition to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and ignited the fires of war.

The conflict between knowledge and ignorance sometimes took a very dangerous turn. If you were to think about it, you will find that this conflict always existed in this world; not only with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* but with their deputies as well. The thing which is intrinsic to the original will be intrinsic to the deputy as well.

If you were to ponder about it, you will notice that even though some people have been Muslims for centuries, when the ʿulamāʾ present the Sharīʿat to them, they become antagonistic towards them. They display their total ignorance in their treatment of the ʿulamāʾ. This is why very few people are free from this conflict. When ignorance comes, it brings with it everything which is intrinsic to it. Bad character, abusiveness, enmity, conflict and antagonism are central to ignorance. When knowledge comes, it brings with it culture, decorum, sound character, love, affection and other related things. When ignorance gains the upper hand, people's character becomes corrupt, they become wayward and crooked; due to which they cannot differentiate between right and wrong. Egotism and self-worship becomes the order of the day. In short, rectitude departs from this world and it becomes a centre of temptation and corruption.

In such a situation, it becomes necessary to convey correct knowledge to the people. Because this is what will uproot ignorance and disperse its darkness. However, people assume that knowledge is easy and action is difficult. I say, knowledge is difficult and action is easy. Action is the result and fruit of

knowledge. Correct knowledge will always result in correct actions. If there is a defect in actions, it is because of defective knowledge. Knowledge comes first and then action. Therefore, when you see defectiveness in action, you must conclude that there is certainly some shortcoming in knowledge. Action is the corollary of knowledge and it is always subservient to it. In other words, if knowledge is perfect, actions will be perfect. If knowledge is defective, so will be actions. In short, the level of knowledge will decide the extent of actions. This is why I said that knowledge is difficult while actions are easy.

Take an example of something which is tangible. All those who are sitting here and listening to my talk are – Māshā Allāh – people of action. You performed ishrāq s̲alāh and came here. Many of you must have performed tahajjud s̲alāh. However, there will be few from among you who will be understanding my lecture. If you went outside and someone were to ask you what I spoke about, very few of you will be able to repeat what I said. This is because knowledge is difficult. It cannot be understood and conveyed without continued and lengthy practice.

The disharmony which we presently see in the madāris is essentially a battle between knowledge and ignorance. I made reference to this previously. This is why students too are not particularly affected by knowledge.

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth. When wealth is given to a person, he becomes indebted. However, we cannot understand how a student does not accept the favour of knowledge. We find people according the same respect to their teachers as they do to the spiritual

mentors. This is because they acquired knowledge from them, and there is no wealth greater than knowledge. Knowledge has turned them into their slaves. H̠ad̠rat ʿAlī *rad̠iyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من علمني حرفا صيّرني عبدا.

The one who teaches me a single letter turns me into his slave.

The opposite is happening today. Teachers are opposed and students are displaying rebellious attitudes to them. This clearly shows that they did not learn anything from their teachers and that knowledge did not have any effect on their hearts. Either they did not benefit at all or, if they did, their knowledge was taken away from them because of their disrespect towards their teachers. They were therefore deprived of their blessings. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Not matter what, it has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that there has always been a conflict between knowledge and ignorance; and knowledge eventually triumphs over ignorance. When correct knowledge is conveyed to others, they come onto the path. The misguidance, ignorance and corruption which you see today is because people do not have correct knowledge. It is generally felt that knowledge is present but there is a dearth in actions, and that this is the reason for corruption in the world. But I am saying to you that the absence of correct knowledge is another reason for a lack of actions. It cannot happen that there is a genuine scholar in a certain place and he is conveying the correct knowledge of the Sharīʿat to the people, and it is not having any effect on them. This is not possible.

We observe the people having some inclination towards actions and worship, but they do not want to come to knowledge. This is because knowledge is difficult. Do you know why knowledge is difficult? When you are in worship, you need to focus on just one thing. If you are in salāh, you to need to focus on salāh. When you are engaged in Allāh's remembrance, you will turn to it. The same can be said of fasting, zakāh, hajj and so on. The temperament will become focused on whatever needs to be done. On the other hand, when it comes to knowledge, the heart and the brain have to be kept occupied on every angle all the time. For example, if you have to speak about sincerity, you will have to think about the various verses which speak about it. You will have to check the different Ahādīth which make mention of it. How is sincerity acquired? What are the things which negate sincerity? If ostentation creeps in, sincerity disappears. If an action is done out of hypocrisy, it will also negate sincerity. In short, you will have to bear in mind all these angles at once, and this is extremely difficult. It confuses the mind of a person.

When I say that knowledge is difficult and worship is easy, I am saying it on the basis of a mutual comparison. It does not mean that there is no difficulty at all in worship. How can I say such a thing!? This is an era of flagrant sinning. If a person fulfils any act of worship it will be a great thing and will undoubtedly demonstrate his excellence. The point I am trying to make is that there is focus in worship, so it is easy. On the other hand, knowledge requires attention to several factors, so it is difficult.

It is because of this difficulty in knowledge that we are seeing some action today. At the same time,

knowledge is waning by the day. A H̲adīth states that knowledge will be scarce towards the latter part of time. We are seeing this today. However, there is another narration which says that there will be a proliferation of knowledge towards the latter part of time. This appears to be a contradiction. The scholars of the past reconciled the two by saying that the reality of knowledge will certainly decrease, but superficial knowledge will increase. Those scholars had said this through their Allāh-inspired foresight, while we are seeing it today. There was a time when a student would record H̲adīth from fajr to z̲uhr. Then from z̲uhr to ʿas̲r, the student and the teacher would discuss whatever was noted. There were no boarding and lodging arrangements for the students. There were no buildings and no madāris. Today, every type of ease is provided in the madāris. There is a library, guest house, teachers of the various sciences, food and clothing. All the means of comfort are present. If there is anything which is not present, it is knowledge. Do you know why this is the case? It is because knowledge is difficult. And because of its difficulty we find so many Ah̲ādīth speaking about the virtues of knowledge. It is not only on the basis of our logic and intellect that we deduced that knowledge is superior. Rather, there are explicit texts in this regard. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم.[1]

The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest of you.

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[1] رواه الترمذي. مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

Another narration states:

فضل العالم على العابد كفضل القمر ليلة البدر على سائر الكواكب.[1]

The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over all the stars.

Did you hear what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said? In one Hadīth he says that the difference between a scholar and a worshipper is like the difference between him and the lowest among you. In another Hadīth he says that a scholar is superior to a worshipper just as the full moon is superior to the stars.

Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* explains this as follows:

Worship is a feat and light which remains with the worshipper; it does not transfer to others. This is why it is compared to the light of the stars. Their light remains with them. On the other hand, knowledge is a merit which provides honour and virtue to the one having it, and is also conveyed to others. Its light is within the scholar and he is described by that virtue. However, it is not the scholar's personal excellence. Rather, it is a light which has been derived from the light of prophet-hood. This is why it is compared to the light of the moon. The moon's light is not its own; it has been derived from the sun.[2]

Comparison between knowledge and practice

The explanation of ʿAllāmah Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* is in itself a beautiful explanation. However, my heart

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

[2] نفع قوت المغتذي، ص ٩٩.

desires to compare knowledge and worship in a manner which is clearer. It is through the blessings of these very same personalities that a point came to my mind. Listen carefully.

Knowledge is superior to worship because it is transferred towards action. Every action has certain rules and regulations. If a person does not have knowledge of them, his action will not be correct. As though the validity of an action is dependent on knowledge of it. Furthermore, the virtues of worship are also because of knowledge. Action is discarded when knowledge is discarded. When correct knowledge enters a person's heart, it is not possible that he does not practise. After all, the fruit of knowledge is inevitable. On the other hand, for action, it is not necessary that a person has correct knowledge of it. There is a general and specific relationship between the two. Knowledge is transitive towards action, but action is not transitive towards knowledge. This is another reason for the superiority of knowledge. We see many people immersed in worship but, let alone other things, they are totally ignorant of the rules which are applicable to that act of worship.

The story of a worshipper

A saint fled from the people and began living in a mountain where he used to worship Allāh *taʿālā*. A youngster became angry with his house-people, so he fled and joined the saint. The saint had placed a candle in one nostril while his other nostril was left open. The boy asked him the reason for doing this. He replied: "I get the fragrance of flowers and other things while living here in the mountain. This causes my carnal self to feel inflated. I placed this impure candle in my other nostril so that my self does not

get inflated and remains on balance." The boy said: "Hadrat, I am not a scholar but I have heard that even if a hair's breadth of place is left dry, wudū' is not complete. By placing this candle in your nostril, some part of your face is definitely left dry and unwashed. This means that your wudū' is not valid in the first place. If your wudū' is not valid your salāh cannot be valid." When he heard this, he repeated all his past salāhs and advised the youngster: "Go back into the town and acquire knowledge. You must then come back and teach me. And I will teach you about spirituality."

Now look! He was a worshipper but did not know the basic rules of salāh and purity. This is what I meant when I said that knowledge is difficult while worship is easy. And by knowledge I am referring to genuine knowledge. That is difficult. As for superficial knowledge, it is not difficult at all.

The heart is the first repository of understanding of Dīn

Listen to what the scholars say in this regard:

قال التوربشتي حقيقة الفقه في الدين ما وقع بالقلب فظهر على لسانه فأفاد علما أورث خشية وتقوى، وأما ما يتدارسه الغرورية فإنه بمعزل عن المرتبة العظمى لأن محله لسانه دون قلبه.[1]

'Allāmah at-Taurbashtī rahimahullāh said: The reality of deep understanding of Dīn is that it reaches the heart first. From there, it emanates from the tongue, conveys knowledge and results in submission and

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[1] نفع قوت المغتذي، ص ٩٩.

piety. As for what the Gharūrī people study and teach, it is far away from that lofty position. This is because it is on the tongue and not in the heart.

Did you see the definition of real knowledge? It is that knowledge regarding which the Qur’ān says:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ.

From His servants, it is only the ‘ulamā’ who fear Allāh.

This is because piety and submission are the fruits of that genuine knowledge which the ‘ulamā’ bear. Allāh *ta‘ālā* says:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

Say: Are those who know and those who do not know equal?

If the two are equal, it would mean that the sunlight and shade are equal, light and darkness are the same; whereas the two are opposites. In the same way, knowledge and ignorance cannot be the same.

The virtue of the ‘ulamā’

You have already observed the virtue of knowledge and, through it, the ‘ulamā’. Now listen to another virtue. You must have heard the saying:

موت العالِم موت العالَم.

The death of a scholar marks the death of the world.

I don’t think you ever heard:

موت العابِد موت العالَم.

The death of a worshipper marks the death of the world.

From here we learn that a scholar is superior to a worshipper. His blessings are indispensable and he has a bond with the world. A worshipper saves only his self, while a scholar rescues countless people from drowning. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says:

> A Sufi emigrated from his khānqāh and went to a madrasah. He gave up the company of the Sufis. I asked him: "<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat, what difference did you see between a worshipper and a scholar which caused you to give up Sufism and take admission in a madrasah where knowledge is imparted?" He replied: "Brother, the fact of the matter is that the blessings of a Sufi are confined and restricted to his self. He will be able to save only himself from the waves of the ocean, while a true scholar of Dīn will do his utmost to rescue as many drowning people as he can. He will not allow them to drown.

You may have also heard the saying:

نوم العالِم عبادة.

The sleep of a scholar is an act of worship.

But I don't think you ever heard:

نوم العابِد عبادة.

The sleep of a worshipper is an act of worship.

This is because a scholar is able to turn worldly matters into Dīnī matters by virtue of his knowledge.

Therefore, even an oblivious act like sleep becomes an act of worship in his favour. He sleeps with knowledge and wakes up with knowledge. In other words, he considers sleep to be an order of Allāh *taʿālā* and a right of his body; so his entire sleep is counted as an act of worship. As for the one who does not have knowledge, it is not far-fetched for him to turn many of his Dīnī activities into worldly activities because of having a wrong intention when doing them.

In short, both these statements were not made in favour of a worshipper. This is so that people may realize the superiority of knowledge and know that the validity or invalidity of actions is based on knowledge. Knowledge is the root while actions are its branches. Even wilāyat (close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*) is a subsidiary of knowledge. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then describes who His friends are:

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

Those who believed and continued fearing.[2]

Friendship with Allāh *taʿālā* is dependent on īmān and fear of Allāh *taʿālā*. And these can only be acquired through knowledge. A poet says:

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 63.

> You will have to melt yourself like a candle for the sake of knowledge. This is because you cannot recognize Allāh *taʿālā* without knowledge.

The signs of a walī

If a person has not acquired Allāh-recognition in the first place, how will he become His walī?

Allāh *taʿālā* says further:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۚ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

We learn from this that Allāh's criterion for wilāyat never changes. These points are explained in the Qur'ān but just look at what has been made the criteria for wilāyat by people. A person who is a walī of Allāh *taʿālā* has these qualities:

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

Those who believed and continued fearing.[2]

But now, neither is īmān nor is Allāh's fear considered to be a prerequisite. In fact, I can go one step further and say that even humanness is not a prerequisite today. A person who prattles the entire day, whose nose is leaking, from whose mouth saliva

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 64.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 63.

is dripping, and who is lying in a drain is considered to be a walī. And when he removes his clothes and lies naked, then there is no doubt about his wilāyat. This is the condition of our beliefs. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from them.

I say, wilāyat is established from the Qur'ān. In the same way, the path to it – perfect īmān and perfect fear of Allāh *taʿālā* – is also described in the Qur'ān. How, then, can personal opinions and logic have a say in delineating what wilāyat is? Can logic be acceptable against a clear text of the Qur'ān and Hadīth? This is nothing but misguidance. Shaytān distorted an excellent and noble thing in such a way that people's very belief-system has been rendered baseless. It is obligatory to believe in the texts, and it is unbelief to reject them. It is a flagrant sin to abstain from acting on them while having the correct belief. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us. Just look at how we deviated. A poet says:

> How can your Islam remain when you discarded the Qur'ān? How can your īmān remain when you extinguished the light of īmān?

The ignoramuses do not have the slightest notion about the wilāyat of the ʿulamā', yet they are convinced about the wilāyat of people of this nature [described previously – who are lying naked in drains]. It is the very same ignorance which the Qur'ān and Hadīth spoke out against.

If the ʿulamā' were to explain these points to the masses and presented correct knowledge to them, many of these ailments would have been rectified. But the difficulty is who is going to do this? If a scholar was to speak on these topics, he will stutter and stammer because he does not have that amount

of confidence. The public too will say to him that they do not find him to be on the desired level of competence. They will say: “Although you are from among ‘those who believed’, we find you devoid of the quality of ‘and continued fearing [Allāh]’.”

Since the ‘ulamā’ know and understand wilāyat but do not come towards it, and the masses know that it is a high rank which is found in some people but not in the ‘ulamā’, so they [masses] allocated it to someone else. In this way, they began believing unqualified people to be qualified for wilāyat. This is why I said repeatedly that all the problems arise from ignorance. When a scholar does not convey correct knowledge to the masses, the latter’s condition will get from bad to worse. As for knowledge, the places which were set up for it are fast becoming empty of it.

Maulānā ‘Abd al-H̲ayy S̲āh̲ib Firangī Mah̲allī *rah̲imahullāh* was an erudite scholar and a dervish as well. But he used to conceal this. Students from distant lands used to come to study under him. After completing their studies, he would assemble the ‘ulamā’ to hand out graduation certificates to the students. He would say to the ‘ulamā’: “These are the students. You may test them on any subject you want.” The ‘ulamā’ would reply: “H̲ad̲rat, there is no need for that. Your attestation is sufficient.” They knew that these students were tutored by H̲ad̲rat Maulānā ‘Abd al-H̲ayy, so no one had the courage to test the students. Now the situation is that neither does the seeker have knowledge of Sufism nor does the scholar have correct knowledge. The saints say that a seeker without knowledge is like a bird without wings. It cannot save itself from its enemies. In the same way, if a seeker does not have

knowledge, he will not be able to save himself from the carnal self and Shayṯān who are his enemies. A Ḫadīth states:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقيه واحد أشد على الشيطان من ألف عابد.[1]

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A single scholar is weightier against Shayṯān than a thousand worshippers.

Shayṯān is terrified by a scholar solely on the basis of his knowledge. As for an ignorant worshipper, he treats him like a morsel of food. He waits for the opportunity to snatch him. A worshipper devoid of knowledge remains defective.

Two levels of knowledge

There are two levels of knowledge. One is when a scholar acquires deep knowledge and becomes a master in his field. He can grasp the mischievousness of the opponents of knowledge and answer their objections. This level of knowledge is farḏ-e-kifāyah. It is necessary to have one such person in every place. If a place does not have such a person, the entire community will be sinning.

The other level is farḏ-e-ʿayn. This means that whatever a person does, he must have knowledge of the Sharīʿat related to that action. If he does not have the necessary knowledge, the action will be incomplete. In fact, it will also be incorrect. Today we do not have even this much of knowledge. Some of us do not even see the need for knowledge. This is the

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

door to ignorance – when no amount of knowledge remains in the heart and mind.

Correct knowledge gives birth to correct action. If there is knowledge but it is not giving birth to action, you can conclude that there is some defect. You must realize this defect and remove it. If you cannot understand it, go to the saints and they will show you the way. All this will only happen if you know that there are two types of knowledge, genuine and superficial, and that we are devoid of genuine knowledge. There is a need to leave the superficiality and move towards the genuine. Once you accept these basics, you will definitely find some servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who will remove you from superficiality and convey you to genuine knowledge. After this, you will undoubtedly become eligible for those virtues of knowledge and the knowledgeable which are mentioned in the Qur'ān and H̲adīth.

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All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the third volume of *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat* has been proofread not once but twice. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I received a lot of help from Maulānā Nabīl Ah̲mad. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn.

This volume contains important sciences. They need to be studied and adopted. This is essential for all Muslims especially the associates of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us. Āmīn. It is through the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* that good deeds are completed.

Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
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TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* translation of this book was completed on 22 Rajab 1441 A.H./16 March 2020. We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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